



# ESSAYS

BY

THOMAS DE  
QUINCEY

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WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY

CHARLES WHIBLEY

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## INTRODUCTION

the collection of the best poetical works". Such was Dr. Chaldecott's task, and well he performed it, with taste, judgment, and alertness, until, in 1861, he failed to the grave. "One happy in many things, he was yet happy in this, that he never lost his interest in life and letters, and only laid aside his pen when death claimed him.

CHARLES WHIBLEY.



## INTRODUCTION

age of thirty-five he had published not a line; thenceforward he was a man of letters, writing for his livelihood; and the rest of his career is but a record of industry, until in 1859 death overtook him.

When De Quincey began to write he had at his command the erudition of many years. He was ready to discourse upon all subjects with a freshness and learning which few of his contemporaries could surpass. His memory gave him the power of infinite and splendid illustration. Nothing perished from his well-stored mind that was worth remembering, though, as he said, "rubbish died instantly". The result is that he explored the remoter continents of knowledge, and travelled almost as far in the realms of thought as Coleridge himself. Though he was not an historian in the newest sense of that word, though he was wholly ignorant of documents and inscriptions, he could decorate the story of the past with a picturesqueness which easily atones for a lack of authenticity. His *Revolt of the Tartars* is a brilliant example of romantic presentation. He wrote of the Cæsars with a knowledge and sympathy which are remarkable in one whose life was not devoted to the study of Roman history. In his view the divine Julius is the greatest man of all time. He praises his

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achievements in war and peace with a passion of admiration. For De Quincey was always a hero-worshipper. It is true that he was soon wearied by the monstrous egoism of Wordsworth, and the luminous sermons of Coleridge. But he found in history the heroes, whom he missed in life, and he coloured his descriptions of them with his own enthusiastic prejudice.

On the other hand, he was, like all hero-worshippers, fierce against those who, in his opinion, played the part of villains in the drama. He hated and admired with equal fervour. He hated Plato and Goethe and Swift. He hated craniologists, punsters, St. Simonians, Jeremy Benthamites, and anti-corn-law lecturers; and who shall say that all his hatreds were unjustified? For him Socrates was a "cunning and libidinous old fellow", a monstrous judgment, truly, which it is difficult to forgive. But it is entirely characteristic of his energetic temperament, and it may be explained by the fact that De Quincey was in all things a sound Tory. Had he lived in Athens he doubtless would have cast his vote against the philosopher, and would willingly have handed him the cup of hemlock. Indeed, it is the paradox of De Quincey's career that he never changed his views con-

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cerning Church and State. Coleridge and Wordsworth might play with politics as they chose—and even they emerged from their early Radicalism—but to De Quincey it was always a comfort to remember that he was the “dutiful child of a pure, holy, and magnificent Church”, while a respect for tradition was, in his eyes, the best safeguard of politics. “If I were dug up two centuries hence,” he said, “I should be found a perfect specimen of a fossil Tory,” and, “intellectual” as he was, he thought it no shame to be a patriot, nor did he ever utter a word in dispraise of the country which claimed him for her son.

Of whatever or whomever he wrote, then, De Quincey expressed a strongly biassed view. Thus it follows that he was not always a sound or consistent critic. He too often missed finer shades, the subtler tones. Yet now and again he displays an astonishing clairvoyance. His famous explanation of the knocking at the gate in *Macbeth* needs but to be stated to convince: “Hence it is,” says he, “that when the deed is done, when the work of darkness is perfect, then the world of darkness passes away like a pageantry in the clouds: the knocking at the gate is heard; and it makes known audibly that the reaction has commenced; the human has made its re-

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flux upon the fiendish; the pulses of life are beginning to beat again; and the re-establishment of the goings-on of the world in which we live, first makes us profoundly sensible of the awful parenthesis that had suspended them." This criticism, like Kean's acting, is reading Shakespeare by a flash of lightning. But such insight is rare in De Quincey, who, despite his faculty of dreaming, criticised all that lay outside himself with a straight and simple eye, and who, still conscious of the images evoked by opium, could find an intense pleasure in the arid speculations of political economy.

But much as he loved multifarious knowledge, keen as was his delight in the picturesque exposition of history, his greatest gift was not critical but imaginative. It was as the English Opium Eater that he first became known to the world, and as the Opium Eater he will be remembered until the end of time. He composed his autobiography with an artificial eloquence which is still unmatched. He painted the many - coloured visions of his dreaming hours in what he called himself "impassioned prose", a prose which, while it is very different from the vehicle of common narrative, never falls into the tricks and cadences of verse. It is thus that he pictures, in a

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typical passage, *Mater Lachrymarum*, Our Lady of Tears: “her eyes are sweet and subtle, wild and sleepy by turns; oftentimes rising to the clouds; oftentimes challenging the heavens. She wears a diadem round her head. And I knew by childish memories that she could go abroad upon the winds, when she heard the sobbing of litanies or the thundering of organs, and when she beheld the mustering of summer clouds.” Here is no blank verse masquerading as prose; despite its poetical fancy, the effect is legitimate if impassioned; and though De Quincey sometimes adorned his sentences too lavishly, he never forgot the true distinctions of prose and poetry.

Midway between the pedestrian measure of *The Caesars* and the passion of the *Suspiria de Profundis* comes the romantic prose of *The English Mail-Coach*, a pæan to the glory of our ancient roads, and to the immortal victories heralded from end to end of England by the Mail. In the days of Trafalgar and the Peninsular, “one heart, one pride, one glory connected every man by the transcendent bond of his national blood”, and in brave terms has De Quincey described “going down with victory” from London; sadly has he deplored these later days, in which “tidings, fitted to convulse all nations, travel by culinary pro-

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cess". Nor does this complete the tale of his gifts. He was a master also of irony, now restrained, now extravagant. For all his admiration of Immanuel Kant, he related his last days with a subtle humour which owed nothing (we may be sure) to the dull German biographer who furnished the facts. On the other hand, when he describes the performances of the infamous Williams in *Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts*, he tries conclusions with Fielding himself.

It has already been said that De Quincey was driven into authorship by lack of money, and, though he was never a journalist in the common sense, his method was always the method of journalism. In other words, he wrote best when the printer's devil was at the door. He loathed the magazines which printed his works, and the importunity of the editors who hustled him; yet he knew well that he could not write under any other system or with any less importunity. The spur galled him, yet he could not move without it. A constant habit of procrastination made it impossible that he should write save at the last moment, and this timid, sensitive man was never so happy as when he lived near "the press". But in his style there is little or no trace of the exigent editor. De Quincey's

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prose has many faults. It is oftentimes prolix or pedantic. Now he finds it impossible to express a simple idea in simple terms; now he separates you from the real purpose of an essay by pages of superfluous commonplace. Or, on the other hand, he distresses you by an inapposite familiarity, as when he calls Josephus "Jo", or describes a compatriot of Julius Cæsar as "our friend the Roman Cit". But though his faults are patent, carelessness is not one of them. No writer was ever more scrupulous concerning the cadence of his phrase. He wrote always by ear, and took a delicate interest in the sound of the English phrase. He criticises Hazlitt and Lamb because their style was not continuous, because they expressed themselves in short sentences and vivid epigrams. And he criticised them with the better reason, because his own style is always continuous: he was a lover of long elaborate sentences, and he zealously practised himself what he admired in others. But that his words should be improvised, and yet show no sign of haste need not surprise us. He had served a long apprenticeship of silence, and probably never discussed anything which he had not pondered long and deeply before ever he dreamed of living by his pen.

Nevertheless, he wrote too much, and it

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would have been far better for his reputation if a great part of his work had found the oblivion it deserved. But, first his own zeal, and then the indiscretion of a too faithful editor, have preserved in countless volumes essays which long since lost their savour. Yet, at his best, he is an accomplished writer of prose who came from no school, and left no disciples. Moreover, his constant habit of autobiography, his frank disclosures of the adventures and privations which chequered his career, have aroused a general curiosity in the man which the writer would not have evoked. He was a legend long before his death, and the strange habit of his life, the vast doses of opium which he took daily, the oddly-assorted garments in which he arrayed himself, his sudden nocturnal appearances intensified the mystery which enshrouded him. To Hill Burton he appeared as “a street boy of some sort in a duffle great-coat”, and if he was never young he preserved something of the child in his heart unto the end. Yet when he spoke, the impression of youth quickly vanished; the flood of talk passed from his lips “free, clear, and continuous—never rising into declamation—never losing a certain mellow earnestness, and all consisting of sentences as exquisitely jointed together as if they were destined to challenge

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## Julius Cæsar

The character of the first Cæsar has perhaps never been worse appreciated than by him who in one sense described it best; that is, with most force and eloquence wherever he really did comprehend it. This was Lucan, who has nowhere exhibited more brilliant rhetoric, nor wandered more from the truth, than in the contrasted portraits of Cæsar and Pompey. The famous line, "*Nil actum reputans si quid superesset agendum*", is a fine feature of the real character, finely expressed. But if it had been Lucan's purpose (as possibly, with a view to Pompey's benefit, in some respects it was) utterly and extravagantly to falsify the character of the great Dictator, by no single trait could he more effectually have fulfilled that purpose, nor in fewer words, than by this expressive passage, "*Gaudensque viam fecisse ruinā*". Such a trait would be almost extravagant applied even to Marius, who (though in many respects a perfect model of Roman grandeur, massy, columnar, imperturbable, and more perhaps than any one man recorded in history capable of justifying the bold illustration of that character in Horace, "*Si fractus illabatur orbis, impavidum ferient ruinæ*") had, however, a ferocity in his character, and a touch of the devil in

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him, very rarely united with the same tranquil intrepidity. But for Cæsar, the all-accomplished statesman, the splendid orator, the man of elegant habits and polished taste, the patron of the fine arts in a degree transcending all example of his own or the previous age, and as a man of general literature so much beyond his contemporaries, except Cicero, that he looked down even upon the brilliant Sylla as an illiterate person—to class such a man with the race of furious destroyers exulting in the desolations they spread, is to err not by an individual trait, but by the whole genus. The Attilas and the Tamerlanes, who rejoice in avowing themselves the scourges of God, and the special instruments of his wrath, have no one feature of affinity to the polished and humane Cæsar, and would as little have comprehended his character, as he could have respected theirs. Even Cato, the unworthy hero of Lucan, might have suggested to him a little more truth in this instance, by a celebrated remark which he made on the characteristic distinction of Cæsar, in comparison with other revolutionary disturbers; for, said he, whereas others had attempted the overthrow of the state in a continued paroxysm of fury, and in a state of mind resembling the lunacy of intoxication, that Cæsar, on the contrary, among that whole class of civil disturbers, was the only one who had come to the task in a temper of sobriety and moderation (*unum accessisse sobrium ad rem publicam d: l:ndam*).

In reality, Lucan did not think as he wrote.

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He had a purpose to serve; and in an age when to act like a freeman was no longer safe, he determined at least to write in that character. It is probable, also, that he wrote with a vindictive or a malicious feeling towards Nero; and, as the single means he had for gratifying such impulses, resolved upon sacrificing the grandeur of Cæsar's character whenever it should be found possible. Meantime, in spite of himself, Lucan for ever betrays his lurking consciousness of the truth. Nor are there any testimonies to Cæsar's vast superiority more memorably pointed, than those which are indirectly and involuntarily extorted from this Catonic poet, by the course of his narration. Never, for example, was there within the same compass of words a more emphatic expression of Cæsar's essential and inseparable grandeur of thought, which could not be disguised or be laid aside for an instant, could not be taught or trained to run in the harness of ordinary uninspiring life, than is found in the three casual words—*Indecilis priuata lequi*. The very mould, it seems, by Lucan's confession, of his trivial conversation was legal; nor could he abjure it for so much as a casual purpose. The acts of Cæsar speak also the same language; and as these are less susceptible of a false colouring than the features of a general character, we find this poet of liberty, in the midst of one continuous effort to distort the truth, and to dress up two scenical heroes, nevertheless forced by the mere necessities of history into a reluctant homage to Cæsar's supremacy of moral grandeur.

Of so great a man it must be interesting to know all the well-attested opinions which bear upon topics of universal interest to human nature; as indeed no others stood much chance of preservation, unless it were from so minute and curious a collector of *anecdote* as Suetonius. And, first, it would be gratifying to know the opinion of Cæsar, if he had any peculiar to himself, on the great theme of Religion. It has been held, indeed, that the constitution of his mind, and the general cast of his character, indisposed him to religious thoughts. Nay, it has been common to class him amongst deliberate atheists; and some well-known anecdotes are current in books, which illustrate his contempt for the vulgar class of religious credulities. In this, however, he went no further than Cicero, and other great contemporaries, who assuredly were no atheists. One mark perhaps of the wide interval which, in Cæsar's age, had begun to separate the Roman nobility from the hungry and venal populace who were daily put up to sale, and bought in crowds by the highest bidder, manifested itself in the increasing disdain for the tastes and ruling sympathies of the mere rude Quirites. No mob could be more abjectly servile than was that of Rome to the superstition of portents, prodigies, and omens. Thus far, in common with his order, and in this sense, Julius Cæsar was naturally a despiser of superstition. Mere strength of understanding would, perhaps, have made him such in any age, and apart from the circumstances of his per-

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social history. But this natural tendency in him would doubtless receive a further bias in the same direction from the office of Pontifex Maximus, which he held at an early stage of his public career. This office, by letting him too much behind the curtain, and exposing too entirely the base machinery of ropes and pulleys, which sustained the miserable jugglery played off upon the popular credulity, impressed him perhaps even unduly with contempt for those who *would* be its dupes. And we may add, that Cæsar was constitutionally, as well as by accident of position, too much a man of the world, had too powerful a leaning to the virtues of *active* life, was governed by too partial a sympathy with the whole class of *active* forces in human nature, as contradistinguished from those which tend to contemplative purposes, under any circumstances, to have become a profound believer, or a steadfast reposer of his fears and anxieties, in religious influences. A man of the world is but another designation for a man indisposed to religious awe or to spiritual enthusiasm. Still it is a doctrine which we cherish, that grandeur of mind in any one department whatsoever, supposing only that it exists in excess, disposes a man to some degree of sympathy with all other grandeur, however alien in its quality or different in its form. And upon this ground we presume the great Dictator to have had an interest in religious themes by mere compulsion of his own extraordinary elevation of mind, after making the fullest allowance for the

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special quality of that mind, which did certainly, to the whole extent of its characteristics, tend entirely to estrange him from such themes. We find, accordingly, that though sincerely a despiser of superstition, and with a frankness which must sometimes have been hazardous in that age, Cæsar was himself also superstitious. No man could have been otherwise who lived and conversed with that generation and people. But if superstitious, he was so after a mode of his own. In his very infirmities Cæsar manifested his greatness : his very littlenesses were noble.

“*Nec licuit populis parvum te; Nile, videre.*”

That he placed some confidence in dreams, for instance, is certain: because, had he slighted them unreservedly, he would not have dwelt upon them afterwards, or have troubled himself to recall their circumstances. Here we trace his human weakness. Yet again we are reminded that it was the weakness of Cæsar; for the dreams were noble in their imagery, and Cæsarean (so to speak) in their tone of moral feeling. Thus, for example, the night before he was assassinated, he dreamt at intervals that he was soaring above the clouds on wings, and that he placed his hand within the right hand of Jove. It would seem that perhaps some obscure and half-formed image floated in his mind, of the eagle, as the king of birds; secondly, as the tutelary emblem under which his conquering legions had so

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often obeyed his voice; and, thirdly, as the bird of Jove. To this triple relation of the bird his dream covertly appears to point. And a singular coincidence appears between this dream and a little anecdote brought down to us, as having actually occurred in Rome about twenty-four hours before his death. A little bird, which by some is represented as a very small kind of sparrow, but which, both to the Greeks and the Romans, was known by a name implying a regal station (probably from the ambitious courage which at times prompted it to attack the hawk), was observed to direct its flight towards the senate-house, consecrated by Pompey, whilst a crowd of other birds were seen to hang upon its flight in close pursuit. What might be the object of the chase, whether the little king himself, or a sprig of laurel which he bore in his mouth, could not be determined. The whole train, pursuers and pursued, continued their flight towards Pompey's hall. Flight and pursuit were there alike arrested; the little king was overtaken by his enemies, who fell upon him as so many conspirators, and tore him limb from limb.

If this anecdote were reported to Caesar, which is not at all improbable, considering the earnestness with which his friends laboured to dissuade him from his purpose of meeting the senate on the approaching Ides of March, it is very little to be doubted that it had a considerable effect upon his feelings, and that, in fact, his own dream grew out of the impression which it had made. This way of linking the

two anecdotes, as cause and effect, would also bring a third anecdote under the same *nexus*. We are told that Calpurnia, the last wife of Cæsar, dreamed on the same night, and to the same ominous result. The circumstances of her dream are less striking, because less figurative; but on that account its import was less open to doubt: she dreamed, in fact, that after the roof of their mansion had fallen in, her husband was stabbed in her bosom. Laying all these omens together, Cæsar would have been more or less than human had he continued utterly undepressed by them. And if so much superstition as even this implies, must be taken to argue some little weakness, on the other hand let it not be forgotten, that this very weakness does but the more illustrate the unusual force of mind, and the heroic will, which obstinately laid aside these *concurring* prefigurations of impending destruction; concurring, we say, amongst themselves—and concurring also with a prophecy of older date, which was totally independent of them all.

There is another and somewhat sublime story of the same class, which belongs to the most interesting moment of Cæsar's life; and those who are disposed to explain all such tales upon physiological principles, will find an easy solution of this, in particular, in the exhaustion of body, and the intense anxiety which must have debilitated even Cæsar under the whole circumstances of the case. On the ever memorable night when he had resolved to take the first step (and in such a case the first

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step, as regarded the power of retreating, was also the final step) which placed him in arms against the state, it happened that his headquarters were at some distance from the little river Rubicon, which formed the boundary of his province. With his usual caution, that no news of his motions might run before himself, on this night Cæsar gave an entertainment to his friends, in the midst of which he slipped away unobserved, and with a small retinue proceeded through the woods to the point of the river at which he designed to cross. The night was stormy, and by the violence of the wind all the torches of his escort were blown out, so that the whole party lost their road, having probably at first intentionally deviated from the main route, and wandered about through the whole night, until the early dawn enabled them to recover their true course. The light was still grey and uncertain, as Cæsar and his retinue rode down upon the banks of the fatal river—to cross which with arms in his hands, since the further bank lay within the territory of the Republic, *ipso facto* proclaimed any Roman a rebel and a traitor. No man, the firmest or the most obtuse, could be otherwise than deeply agitated, when looking down upon this little brook—so insignificant in itself, but invested by law with a sanctity so awful, and so dire a consecration. The whole course of future history, and the fate of every nation, would necessarily be determined by the irretrievable act of the next half hour.

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In these moments, and with this spectacle before him, and contemplating these immeasurable consequences consciously for the last time that could allow him a retreat,—impressed also by the solemnity and deep tranquillity of the silent dawn, whilst the exhaustion of his night wanderings predisposed him to nervous irritation,—Cæsar, we may be sure, was profoundly agitated. The whole elements of the scene were almost scenically disposed; the law of antagonism having perhaps never been employed with so much effect: the little quiet brook presenting a direct antithesis to its grand political character; and the innocent dawn, with its pure, untroubled repose, contrasting potently, to a man of any intellectual sensibility, with the long chaos of bloodshed, darkness, and anarchy, which was to take its rise from the apparently trifling acts of this one morning. So prepared, we need not much wonder at what followed. Cæsar was yet lingering on the hither bank, when suddenly, at a point not far distant from himself, an apparition was descried in a sitting posture, and holding in its hand what seemed a flute. This phantom was of unusual size, and of beauty more than human, so far as its lineaments could be traced in the early dawn. What is singular, however, in the story, on any hypothesis which would explain it out of Cæsar's individual condition, is, that others saw it as well as he; both pastoral labourers (who were present, probably, in the character of guides), and some of the sentinels stationed

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at the passage of the river. These men fancied even that a strain of music issued from this aerial flute. And some, both of the shepherds and the Roman soldiers, who were bolder than the rest, advanced towards the figure. Amongst this party, it happened that there were a few Roman trumpeters. From one of these, the phantom, rising as they advanced nearer, suddenly caught a trumpet, and blowing through it a blast of superhuman strength, plunged into the Rubicon, passed to the other bank, and disappeared in the dusky twilight of the dawn. Upon which Cæsar exclaimed :—"It is finished —the die is cast—let us follow whither the guiding portents from Heaven, and the malice of our enemy, alike summon us to go". So saying, he crossed the river with impetuosity; and, in a sudden rapture of passionate and vindictive ambition, placed himself and his retinue upon the Italian soil; and, as if by inspiration from Heaven, in one moment involved himself and his followers in treason, raised the standard of revolt, put his foot upon the neck of the invincible republic which had humbled all the kings of the earth, and founded an empire which was to last for a thousand and half a thousand years. In what manner this spectral appearance was managed — whether Cæsar were its author, or its dupe—will remain unknown for ever. But undoubtedly this was the first time that the advanced guard of a victorious army was headed by an apparition; and we may conjecture that it will be the last.

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In the mingled yarn of human life, tragedy is never far asunder from farce; and it is amusing to retrace in immediate succession to this incident of epic dignity, which has its only parallel, by the way, in the case of Vasco da Gama (according to the narrative of Camoens), when met and confronted by a sea phantom, whilst attempting to double the Cape of Storms (Cape of Good Hope), a ludicrous passage, in which one felicitous blunder did Cæsar a better service than all the truths which Greece and Rome could have furnished. In our own experience, we once witnessed a blunder about as gross. Lord Brougham, in his first electioneering contest with the Lowthers (A.D. 1818), upon some occasion where he was recriminating upon the other party, and complaining that stratagems, which *they* might practise with impunity, were denied to him and his, happened to point the moral of his complaint, by alleging the old adage, that one man might steal a horse with more hope of indulgence than another could look over the hedge. Whereupon, by benefit of the universal mishearing in the outermost ring of the audience, it became generally reported that Lord Lowther had once been engaged in an affair of horse-stealing; and that he, Henry Brougham, could (had he pleased) have lodged an information against him, seeing that he was then looking over the hedge. And this charge naturally won the more credit, because it was notorious and past denying that his lordship was a capital horseman, fond of horses, and

much connected with the rest. To this host, therefore, amongst bare worthy sheepards and other "daubers" of Benny Westmoreland, it is a sacred article of their creed, and (as they justly observe in northern pronunciation), a Heretic thing to be told, that Lord Louther was once a Jacobite, and that he escaped dying by reason of Harry Beaupre's pity for his tender years and hopeful looks. Not less was the Humble which, on the banks of the Rubicon, besieged Caesar. Immediately after crossing, he harangued the troops whom he had sent forward, and others who there met him from the neighbouring partition of Ariminium. The tribunes of the people, those great officers of the democracy, corresponding by some of their functions to our House of Commons, men personally, and by their position in the state, entirely in Cæsar's interest, and who, for his sake, had fled from home, there and then he produced to the soldiery; thus identified his cause, and that of the soldiers, with the cause of the people of Rome and of Roman liberty; and perhaps with needless rhetoric attempted to conciliate those who were by a thousand ties and by claims innumerable, his own already; for never yet has it been found, that with the soldier, who, from youth upwards, passes his life in camps, could the duties or the interests of the citizen survive those stronger and more personal relations connecting him with his military superior. In the course of this harangue, Cæsar often raised his left hand with Demosthenic action, and

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on thrones under the denominations of Czars, Kesars, or Cæsars of the Bosphorus and the Danube ; of all in every age that should inherit his supremacy of mind, or should subject to themselves the generations of ordinary men by qualities analogous to his. Of this infinite superiority some part must be ascribed to his early emancipation from paternal control. There are very many cases in which, simply from considerations of sex, a female cannot stand forward as the head of a family, or as its suitable representative. If they are even ladies paramount, and in situations of command, they are also women. The staff of authority does not annihilate their sex ; and scruples of female delicacy interfere for ever to unnerve and emasculate in their hands the sceptre however otherwise potent. Hence we see, in noble families, the merest boys put forward to represent the family dignity, as fitter supporters of that burden than their mature mothers. And of Cæsar's mother, though little is recorded, and that little incidentally, this much at least we learn—that, if she looked down upon him with maternal pride and delight, she looked up to him with female ambition as the re-edifier of her husband's honours,—looked with reverence as to a column of the Roman grandeur, and with fear and feminine anxieties as to one whose aspiring spirit carried him but too prematurely into the fields of adventurous strife. One slight and evanescent sketch of the relations which subsisted between Cæsar and his mother, caught from the wrecks of time, is preserved both by

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Plutarch and Suetonius. We see in the early dawn the young patrician standing upon the steps of his patrimonial portico, his mother with her arms wreathed about his neck, looking up to his noble countenance, sometimes drawing auguries of hope from features so fitted for command, sometimes boding an early blight to promises so dangerously magnificent. That she had something of her son's aspiring character, or that he presumed so much in a mother of his, we learn from the few words which survive of their conversation. He addressed to her no language that could tranquillize her fears. On the contrary, to any but a Roman mother his valedictory words, taken in connexion with the known determination of his character, were of a nature to consummate her depression, as they tended to confirm the very worst of her fears. He was then going to stand his chance in a popular electioneering contest for an office of the highest dignity, and to launch himself upon the storms of the Campus Martius. At that period, besides other and more ordinary dangers, the bands of gladiators, kept in the pay of the more ambitious or turbulent amongst the Roman nobles, gave a popular tone of ferocity and of personal risk to the course of such contests; and either to forestall the victory of an antagonist, or to avenge their own defeat, it was not at all impossible that a body of incensed competitors might intercept his final triumph by assassination. For this danger, however, he had no leisure in his thoughts of consolation; the sole danger which he contemplated,

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or supposed his mother to contemplate, was the danger of defeat, and for that he reserved his consolations. He bade her fear nothing; for that his determination was to return with victory, and with the ensigns of the dignity he sought, or to return a corpse.

Early indeed did Cæsar's trials commence; and it is probable, that, had not the death of his father, by throwing him prematurely upon his own resources, prematurely developed the masculine features of his character, forcing him whilst yet a boy under the discipline of civil conflict and the yoke of practical life, even *his* energies might have been insufficient to sustain them. His age is not exactly ascertained, but it is past a doubt that he had not reached his twentieth year when he had the hardihood to engage in a struggle with Sylla, then Dictator, and exercising the immoderate powers of that office with the license and the severity which history has made so memorable. He had neither any distinct grounds of hope, nor any eminent example at that time, to countenance him in this struggle—which yet he pushed on in the most uncompromising style, and to the utmost verge of defiance. The subject of the contrast gives it a further interest. It was the youthful wife of the youthful Cæsar who stood under the shadow of the great Dictator's displeasure; not personally, but politically, on account of her connexions: and her it was, Cornelia, the daughter of a man who had been four times consul, that Cæsar was required to divorce: but he spurned the haughty mandate,

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and carried his determination to a triumphant issue, notwithstanding his life was at stake, and at one time saved only by shifting his place of concealment every night; and this young lady it was who afterwards became the mother of his only daughter. Both mother and daughter, it is remarkable, perished prematurely, and at critical periods of Cæsar's life; for it is probable enough that these irreparable wounds to Cæsar's domestic affections threw him with more exclusiveness of devotion upon the fascinations of glory and ambition than might have happened under a happier condition of his private life. That Cæsar should have escaped destruction in this unequal contest with an enemy then wielding the whole thunders of the state, is somewhat surprising; and historians have sought their solution of the mystery in the powerful intercessions of the vestal virgins, and several others of high rank amongst the connexions of his great house. These may have done something; but it is due to Sylla, who had a sympathy with everything truly noble, to suppose him struck with powerful admiration for the audacity of the young patrician, standing out in such severe solitude among so many examples of timid concession; and that to this magnanimous feeling in the Dictator, much of the indulgence which he showed may have been really due. In fact, according to some accounts, it was not Sylla, but the creatures of Sylla (*adjutores*), who pursued Cæsar. We know, at all events, that Sylla formed a right estimate of Cæsar's char-

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acter, and that, from the complexion of his conduct in this one instance, he drew that famous prophecy of his future destiny; bidding his friends beware of that slipshod boy, "for that in him lay couchant many a Marius". A grander testimony to the awe which Cæsar inspired, or from one who knew better the qualities of that Cyclopean man by whose scale he measured the patrician boy, cannot be imagined.

It is not our intention, or consistent with our plan, to pursue this great man through the whole circumstances of his romantic career; though it is certain that many parts of his life require investigation much keener than has ever been applied to them, and that many might be placed in a new light. Indeed, the whole of this most momentous section of ancient history ought to be recomposed with the critical scepticism of a Niebuhr, and the same comprehensive collation resting, if possible, on the felicitous interpretation of authorities. In reality it is the hinge upon which turned the future destiny of the whole earth; and having therefore a common relation to all modern nations whatsoever, should naturally have been cultivated with the zeal which belongs to a personal concern. In general, the anecdotes which express most vividly the grandeur of character in the first Cæsar, are those which illustrate his defiance of danger in extremity,—the prodigious energy and rapidity of his decisions and motions in the field (looking to which it was that Cicero called him a *τερπας* or por-

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which he had made for the staff with which he practised the lessons of his exercises, and the time I spent with him. In me, however, was severely and reproachfully rebuked, so that my impatience and obstinacy were the extremiter punishment of myself. He advised in tutiling a better course to his son, Cæsar, upon whom, upon something so minute as that publick was intended a capital action of easily. He was supposed as it were by me to have lost his whole integrity by calumniating "Thess., and by the contact with the earth, do I take possession of thee, O Africa!" in that way owing to an accident the resemblance of a symbolic purpose. Highly suspicious was the prudency of fortitude with which he faced the whole extent of a calamity when palliation could do no good, "*non nequando, iniquendone, sed insuper amplificando, exercitando*"; as when, upon finding his soldiery alarmed at the approach of Juba, with forces really great, but exaggerated by their terrors, he addressed them in a military harangue to the following effect:—"Know that within a few days the King will come up with us, bringing with him sixty thousand legionaries, thirty thousand cavalry, one hundred thousand light troops, besides three hundred elephants. Such being the case, let me hear no more of conjectures and opinions, for you have now my warrant for the fact, whose information is past doubting. Therefore, be satisfied; otherwise, I will put every man of you on board some crazy old fleet, and whistle you down the tide—no matter under what winds, no matter

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towards what shore." Finally, we might seek for characteristic anecdotes of Cæsar in his unexampled liberalities and contempt of money.

Upon this last topic it is the just remark of Casaubon, that some instances of Cæsar's munificence have been thought apocryphal, or to rest upon false readings, simply from ignorance of the heroic scale upon which the Roman splendours of that age proceeded. A forum which Cæsar built out of the products of his last campaign, by way of a present to the Roman people, cost him — for the ground merely on which it stood—nearly eight hundred thousand pounds. To the *citizens* of Rome he presented, in one *congiary*, about two guineas and a half a head. To his army, in one *donation*, upon the termination of the civil war, he gave a sum which allowed about two hundred pounds a man to the infantry, and four hundred to the cavalry. It is true that the legionary troops were then much reduced by the sword of the enemy, and by the tremendous hardships of their last campaigns. In this, however, he did perhaps no more than repay a debt. For it is an instance of military attachment, beyond all that Wallenstein or any commander, the most beloved amongst his troops, has ever experienced, that, on the breaking out of the civil war, not only did the centurions of every legion severally maintain a horse soldier, but even the privates volunteered to serve without pay, and (what might seem impossible) without their daily rations. This was accomplished by subscriptions amongst themselves, the more

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opulent undertaking for the maintenance of the needy. Their disinterested love for Cæsar appeared in another and more difficult illustration: it was a traditional anecdote in Rome, that the majority of those amongst Cæsar's troops, who had the misfortune to fall into the enemy's hands, refused to accept their lives under the condition of serving against him.

In connexion with this subject of his extraordinary munificence, there is one aspect of Cæsar's life which has suffered much from the misrepresentations of historians, and that is—the vast pecuniary embarrassments under which he laboured, until the profits of war had turned the scale even more prodigiously in his favour. At one time of his life, when appointed to a foreign office, so numerous and so clamorous were his creditors, that he could not have left Rome on his public duties, had not Crassus come forward with assistance in money, or by guarantees, to the amount of nearly two hundred thousand pounds. And at another, he was accustomed to amuse himself with computing how much money it would require to make him worth exactly nothing (*i.e.* simply to clear him of debts); this, by one account, amounted to upwards of two millions sterling. Now the error of historians has been—to represent these debts as the original ground of his ambition and his revolutionary projects, as though the desperate condition of his private affairs had suggested a civil war to his calculations as the best or only mode of redressing it. Such a policy would have resembled the last

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desperate resource of an unprincipled gambler, who, on seeing his final game at chess, and the accumulated stakes depending upon it, all on the brink of irretrievable sacrifice, dexterously up-sets the chess-board, or extinguishes the lights. But Julius, the one sole patriot of Rome, could find no advantage to his plans in darkness or in confusion. Honestly supported, he would have crushed the oligarchies of Rome by crushing in its lairs that venal and hunger-bitten democracy which made oligarchy and its machineries relentless. Cæsar's debts, far from being stimulants and exciting causes of his political ambition, stood in an inverse relation to the ambition ; they were its results, and represented its natural costs, being contracted from first to last in the service of his political intrigues, for raising and maintaining a powerful body of partisans, both in Rome and elsewhere. Whosoever indeed will take the trouble to investigate the progress of Cæsar's ambition, from such materials as even yet remain, may satisfy himself that the scheme of revolutionizing the Republic, and placing himself at its head, was no growth of accident or circumstances ; above all, that it did not arise upon any so petty and indirect a suggestion as that of his debts ; but that his debts were in their very first origin purely ministerial to his wise, indispensable, and patriotic ambition ; and that his revolutionary plans were at all periods of his life a direct and foremost object, but in no case bottomed upon casual impulses. In this there was not only patriotism, but in fact the

one sole mode of patriotism which could have prospered, or could have found a field of action. Chatter not, sublime reader, commonplaces of scoundrel moralists against ambition. In some cases ambition is a hopeful virtue; in others (as in the Rome of our resplendent Julius) ambition was the virtue by which any other could flourish. It had become evident to everybody that Rome, under its present constitution, must fall; and the sole question was—by whom? Even Pompey, not by nature of an aspiring turn, and prompted to his ambitious course undoubtedly by circumstances and the friends who besieged him, was in the habit of saying, “*Sylla potuit, ego non potero?*” *Sylla found it possible, shall I find it not so?* Possible to do what? To overthrow the political system of the Republic. This had silently collapsed into an order of things so vicious—growing also so hopelessly worse, that all honest patriots invoked a purifying revolution, even though bought at the heavy price of a tyranny, rather than face the chaos of murderous distractions to which the tide of feuds and frenzies was violently tending. Such a revolution at such a price was not less Pompey’s object than Cæsar’s. In a case, therefore, where no benefit of choice was allowed to Rome as respected the thing, but only as respected the person, Cæsar had the same right to enter the arena in the character of combatant as could belong to any one of his rivals. And that he *did* enter that arena constructively, and by secret design, from his very earliest manhood, may be gathered

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motive, was the sagacious munificence of Cæsar. Apart from this motive, and considered in and for itself, and simply with a reference to the splendid forms which it often assumed, this munificence would furnish the materials for a volume. The public entertainments of Cæsar, his spectacles and shows, his naumachiae, and the pomps of his unrivalled triumphs (the closing triumphs of the Republic), were severally the finest of their kind which had then been brought forward. Sea-fights were exhibited upon the grandest scale, according to every known variety of nautical equipment and mode of conflict, upon a vast lake formed artificially for that express purpose. Mimic land-fights were conducted, in which all the circumstances of real war were so faithfully rehearsed, that even elephants "indorsed with towers"; twenty on each side, took part in the combat. Dramas were represented in every known language (*per omnium linguarum histriones*). And hence [that is, from the conciliatory feeling thus expressed towards the various tribes of foreigners resident in Rome] some have derived an explanation of what is else a mysterious circumstance amongst the ceremonial observances at Cæsar's funeral — that all people of foreign nations then residing at Rome, distinguished themselves by the conspicuous share which they took in the public mourning; and that, beyond all other foreigners, the Jews for night after night kept watch and ward about the emperor's grave. Never before, according to traditions which lasted through several generations in Rome, had there been

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so vast a conflux of the human race congregated to any one centre, on any one attraction of business or of pleasure, as to Rome on occasion of these triumphal spectacles exhibited by Cæsar.

In our days, the greatest occasional gatherings of the human race are in India, especially at the great fair of the *Hurdwar* on the Ganges in northern Hindustan : a confluence of some millions is sometimes seen at that spot, brought together under the mixed influences of devotion and commercial business, but very soon dispersed as rapidly as they had been convoked. Some such spectacle of nations crowding upon nations, and some such Babylonian confusion of dresses, complexions, languages, and jargons, was then witnessed at Rome. Accommodation within doors, and under roofs of houses, or roofs of temples, was altogether impossible. Myriads encamped along the streets, and along the high-roads, fields, or gardens. Myriads lay stretched on the ground, without even the slight protection of tents, in a vast circuit about the city. Multitudes of men, even senators, and others of the highest rank, were trampled to death in the crowds. And the whole family of man might seem at that time to be converged at the bidding of the dead Dictator. But these, or any other themes connected with the public life of Cæsar, we notice only in those circumstances which have been overlooked, or partially represented by historians. Let us now, in conclusion, bring forward, from the obscurity in which they have hitherto lurked, the anec-

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alienation of the Senate charged, in no trifling degree, upon a gross and most culpable failure in point of courtesy. Cæsar, it is alleged—but might we presume to call upon antiquity for its authority—neglected to rise from his seat, on their approaching him with an address of congratulation. It is said, and we can believe it, that he gave deeper offence by this one defect in a matter of ceremonial observance, than by all his substantial attacks upon their privileges. What we find it difficult to believe is not that result from that offence—this is no more than we should all anticipate—not *that*, but the possibility of the offence itself, from one so little arrogant as Cæsar, and so entirely a man of the world. He was told of the disgust which he had given, and we are bound to believe his apology, in which he charged it upon sickness, that would not at the moment allow him to maintain a standing attitude. Certainly the whole tenor of his life was not courteous only, but kind; and, to his enemies, merciful in a degree which implied so much more magnanimity than men in general could understand, that by many it was put down to the account of weakness.

Weakness, however, there was none in Caius Cæsar; and, that there might be none, it was fortunate that conspiracy should have cut him off in the full vigour of his faculties, in the very meridian of his glory, and on the brink of completing a series of gigantic achievements. Amongst these are numbered—a digest of the entire body of laws, even then become un-

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wieldy and oppressive; the establishment of vast and comprehensive public libraries, Greek as well as Latin; the chastisement of Dacia (that needed a cow-hiding for insolence as much as Afghanistan from us in 1840); the conquest of Parthia; and the cutting a ship canal through the Isthmus of Corinth. The reformation of the calendar he had already accomplished. And of all his projects it may be said, that they were equally patriotic in their purpose, and colossal in their proportions.

As an orator, Cæsar's merit was so eminent, that, according to the general belief, had he found time to cultivate this department of civil exertion, the received supremacy of Cicero would have been made questionable, or the honours would have been divided. Cicero himself was of that opinion; and on different occasions applied the epithet *Splendidus* to Cæsar, as though in some exclusive sense, or with some peculiar emphasis, due to him. His taste was much simpler, chaster, and less inclined to the *florid* and Asiatic, than that of Cicero. So far he would, in that condition of the Roman culture and feeling, have been less acceptable to the public; but, on the other hand, he would have compensated this disadvantage by much more of natural and Demosthenic fervour.

In literature, the merits of Cæsar are familiar to most readers. Under the modest title of *Commentaries*, he meant to offer the records of his Gallic and British campaigns, simply as

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notes, or memoranda, afterwards to be worked up by regular historians; but, as Cicero observes, their merit was such in the eyes of the discerning, that all judicious writers shrank from the attempt to alter them. In another instance of his literary labours, he showed a very just sense of true dignity. Rightly conceiving that everything patriotic was dignified, and that to illustrate or polish his native language, was a service of real and paramount patriotism, he composed a work on the grammar and orthoepy of the Latin language. Cicero and himself were the only Romans of distinction in that age, who applied themselves with true patriotism to the task of purifying and ennobling their mother tongue. Both were aware of a transcendent value in the Grecian literature as it then stood; but that splendour did not depress their hopes of raising their own to something of the same level. As respected the natural wealth of the two languages, it was the private opinion of Cicero, that the Latin had the advantage; and if Cæsar did not accompany him to that length, which, perhaps, under some limitations he ought to have done, yet he felt that it was but the more necessary to draw forth any special or exceptional advantage which it really had.

Was Cæsar, upon the whole, the greatest of men? We restrict the question, of course, to the classes of men great in *action*; great by the extent of their influence over their social contemporaries; great by throwing open avenues to extended powers that previously had been

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closed; great by making obstacles once vast to become trivial; or prizes that once were trivial to be glorified by expansion. I (said Augustus Cæsar) found Rome built of brick; but I left it built of marble. Well, my man, we reply, for a wondrously little chap, you did what in Westmoreland they call a good *darrach* (day's work); and if *nawies* had been wanted in those days, you should have had our vote to a certainty. But Caius Julius, even under such a limitation of the comparison, did a thing as much transcending this—as it was greater to project Rome across the Alps and the Pyrenees—expanding the grand Republic into crowning provinces of 1. France (*Callia*), 2. Belgium, 3. Holland (*Batavia*), 4. England (*Britannia*), 5. Savoy (*Allobroges*), 6. Switzerland (*Helvetia*), 7. Spain (*Hispania*)—than to decorate a street or to found an amphitheatre. Dr. Beattie once observed, that if that question as to the greatest man in action upon the rolls of History, were left to be collected from the suffrages already expressed in books, and scattered throughout the literature of all nations, the scale would be found to have turned prodigiously in Cæsar's favour, as against any single competitor; and there is no doubt whatsoever, that even amongst his own countrymen, and his own contemporaries, the same verdict would have been returned, had it been collected upon the famous principle of Themistocles, that he should be reputed the first, whom the greatest number of rival voices had pronounced to be the second.



# Revolt of the Tartars

Or, Flight of the Kalmuck Khan and his People from the Russian Territories to the Frontiers of China.

There is no great event in modern history, or, perhaps it may be said more broadly, none in all history, from its earliest records, less generally known, or more striking to the imagination, than the flight eastwards of a principal Tartar nation across the boundless *steppes* of Asia in the latter half of the last century. The *terminus à quo* of this flight, and the *terminus ad quem*, are equally magnificent; the mightiest of Christian thrones being the one, the mightiest of Pagan the other. And the grandeur of these two terminal objects is harmoniously supported by the romantic circumstances of the flight. In the abruptness of its commencement, and the fierce velocity of its execution, we read the wild barbaric character of those who conducted the movement. In the unity of purpose connecting this myriad of wills, and in the blind but unerring aim at a mark so remote, there is something which recalls to the mind those almighty instincts that propel the migrations of the swallow and the leeming, or the life-withering marches of the locust. Then again,

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in the gloomy vengeance of Russia and her vast artillery, which hung upon the rear and the skirts of the fugitive vassals, we are reminded of Miltonic images—such, for instance, as that of the solitary hand pursuing through desert spaces and through ancient chaos a rebellious host, and overtaking with volleying thunders those who believed themselves already within the security of darkness and of distance.

I shall have occasion, farther on, to compare this event with other great national catastrophes as to the magnitude of the suffering. But it may also challenge a comparison with similar events under another relation, viz., as to its dramatic capabilities. Few cases, perhaps, in romance or history, can sustain a close collation with this as to the *complexity* of its separate interests. The great outline of the enterprise, taken in connection with the operative motives, hidden or avowed, and the religious sanctions under which it was pursued, give to the case a triple character: 1st, That of a *conspiracy*, with as close a unity in the incidents, and as much of a personal interest in the moving characters, with fine dramatic contrasts, as belongs to "Venice Preserved", or to the "Fiesco" of Schiller. 2dly, That of a great *military expedition*, offering the same romantic features of vast distances to be traversed, vast reverses to be sustained, untried routes, enemies obscurely ascertained, and hardships too vaguely prefigured, which mark the Egyptian expedition of Cambyses—which mark the anabasis of the younger Cyrus, and the subsequent retreat of

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the ten thousand—which mark the Parthian expeditions of the Romans, especially those of Crassus and Julian—or (as more disastrous than any of them, and, in point of space as well as in amount of forces, more extensive) the Russian anabasis and katabasis of Napoleon.

3dly, That of a religious *Exodus*, authorized by an oracle venerated throughout many nations of Asia, an Exodus, therefore, in so far resembling the great Scriptural Exodus of the Israelites, under Moses and Joshua, as well as in the very peculiar distinction of carrying along with them their entire families, women, children, slaves, their herds of cattle and of sheep, their horses and their camels.

This triple character of the enterprise naturally invests it with a more comprehensive interest. But the dramatic interest which I have ascribed to it, or its fitness for a stage representation, depends partly upon the marked variety and the strength of the personal agencies concerned, and partly upon the succession of scenical situations. Even the *steppes*, the camels, the tents, the snowy and the sandy deserts, are not beyond the scale of our modern representative powers, as often called into action in the theatres both of Paris and London; and the series of situations unfolded, beginning with the general conflagration on the Wolga—passing thence to the disastrous scenes of the flight (as it *literally* was in its commencement)—to the Tartar siege of the Russian fortress Koulagina—the bloody engagement with the Cossacks in the mountain passes at Ouchin—

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the surprisal by the Bashkirs, and the advanced posts of the Russian army at Torgau—the private conspiracy at this point against the Khan—the long succession of running fights—the parting massacres at the Lake of Tengis under the eyes of the Chinese—and finally, the tragical retribution to Zebek-Dorchi at the hunting lodge of the Chinese emperor;—all these situations communicate a *scenical* animation to the wild romance, if treated dramatically; whilst a higher and a philosophic interest belongs to it as a case of authentic history, commemorating a great revolution for good and for evil, in the fortunes of a whole people—a people semi-barbarous, but simple-hearted, and of ancient descent.

On the 21st of January, 1761, the young Prince Oubacha assumed the sceptre of the Kalmucks upon the death of his father. Some part of the power attached to this dignity he had already wielded since his fourteenth year, in quality of Vice-Khan, by the express appointment and with the avowed support of the Russian Government. He was now about eighteen years of age, amiable in his personal character, and not without titles to respect in his public character as a sovereign prince. In times more peaceable, and amongst a people more entirely civilized, or more humanized by religion, it is even probable that he might have discharged his high duties with considerable distinction. But his lot was thrown upon stormy times, and a most difficult crisis amongst tribes, whose native ferocity was exasperated

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by debasing forms of superstition, and by a nationality as well as an inflated conceit of their own merit absolutely unparalleled, whilst the circumstances of their hard and trying position under the jealous *surveillance* of an irresistible lord paramount, in the person of the Russian Czár, gave a fiercer edge to the natural unamiableness of the Kalmuck disposition, and irritated its gloomier qualities into action under the restless impulses of suspicion and permanent distrust. No prince could hope for a cordial allegiance from his subjects, or a peaceful reign under the circumstances of the case; for the dilemma in which a Kalmuck ruler stood at present was of this nature: *wanting* the sanction and support of the Czar, he was inevitably too weak from without to command confidence from his subjects, or resistance to his competitors; on the other hand, *with* this kind of support, and deriving his title in any degree from the favour of the Imperial Court, he became almost in that extent an object of hatred at home, and within the whole compass of his own territory. He was at once an object of hatred for the past, being a living monument of national independence, ignominiously surrendered, and an object of jealousy for the future, as one who had already advertised himself to be a fitting tool for the ultimate purposes (whatsoever those might prove to be) of the Russian Court. Coming himself to the Kalmuck sceptre under the heaviest weight of prejudice from the unfortunate circumstances of his position, it might have been expected

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after, assuming a well-counterfeited alarm, he fled to Tcherkask, followed by sixty-five tents. From this place he kept up a correspondence with the Imperial Court; and, by way of soliciting his cause more effectually, he soon repaired in person to St. Petersburg. Once admitted to personal conferences with the cabinet, he found no difficulty in winning over the Russian counsels to a concurrence with some of his political views, and thus covertly introducing the point of that wedge which was finally to accomplish his purposes. In particular, he persuaded the Russian Government to make a very important alteration in the constitution of the Kalmuck State Council, which in effect re-organized the whole political condition of the state, and disturbed the balance of power as previously adjusted. Of this council—in the Kalmuck language called Sarga — there were eight members, called Sargatchi ; and hitherto it had been the custom that these eight members should be entirely subordinate to the Khan ; holding, in fact, the ministerial character of secretaries and assistants, but in no respect acting as co-ordinate authorities. That had produced some inconveniences in former reigns ; and it was easy for Zebek-Dorchi to point the jealousy of the Russian Court to others more serious, which might arise in future circumstances of war or other contingencies. It was resolved, therefore, to place the Sargatchi henceforwards on a footing of perfect independence, and therefore (as regarded responsibility) on a footing of equality with the Khan. Their

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independence, however, had respect only to their own sovereign; for towards Russia they were placed in a new attitude of direct duty and accountability, by the creation in their favour of small pensions (300 roubles a-year), which, however, to a Kalmuck of that day were more considerable than might be supposed, and had a further value as marks of honorary distinction emanating from a great empress. Thus far the purposes of Zebek-Dorchi were served effectually for the moment: but, apparently, it was only for the moment; since, in the further development of his plots, this very dependency upon Russian influence would be the most serious obstacle in his way. There was, however, another point carried which outweighed all inferior considerations, as it gave him a power of setting aside discretionally whatsoever should arise to disturb his plots: he was himself appointed President and Controller of the Sargatchi. The Russian Court had been aware of his high pretensions by birth, and hoped by this promotion to satisfy the ambition which, in some degree, was acknowledged to be a reasonable passion for any man occupying his situation.

Having thus completely blindfolded the Cabinet of Russia, Zebek-Dorchi proceeded in his new character to fulfil his political mission with the Khan of the Kalmucks. So artfully did he prepare the road for his favourable reception at the court of this prince, that he was at once and universally welcomed as a benefactor. The pensions of the counsellors were

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other enemies. It may be readily supposed, indeed, that he who could deliberately raise his eyes to the Russian autocrat as an antagonist in single duel with himself, was not likely to feel much anxiety about Kalmuck enemies of whatever rank. He took his resolution, therefore, sternly and irrevocably to effect this astonishing translation of an ancient people across the pathless deserts of Central Asia, intersected continually by rapid rivers, rarely furnished with bridges, and of which the fords were known only to those who might think it for their interest to conceal them, through many nations inhospitable or hostile; frost and snow around them (from the necessity of commencing their flight in winter), famine in their front, and the sabre, or even the artillery of an offended and mighty empress, hanging upon their rear for thousands of miles. But what was to be their final mark—the port of shelter after so fearful a course of wandering? Two things were evident: it must be some power at a great distance from Russia, so as to make return even in that view hopeless; and it must be a power of sufficient rank to insure them protection from any hostile efforts on the part of the Czarina for reclaiming them, or for chastising their revolt. Both conditions were united obviously in the person of Kien Long, the reigning Emperor of China, who was farther recommended to them by his respect for the head of their religion. To China, therefore, and, as their first rendezvous, to the shadow of the great Chinese Wall, it was

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settled by Zebek that they should direct their flight.

Next came the question of time—*when* should the flight commence? and finally, the more delicate question as to the choice of accomplices. To extend the knowledge of the conspiracy too far, was to insure its betrayal to the Russian Government. Yet, at some stage of the preparations, it was evident that a very extensive confidence must be made, because in no other way could the mass of the Kalmuck population be persuaded to furnish their families with the requisite equipments for so long a migration. This critical step, however, it was resolved to defer up to the latest possible moment, and, at all events, to make no general communication on the subject until the time of departure should be definitely settled. In the meantime, Zebek admitted only three persons to his confidence; of whom Oubacha, the reigning prince, was almost necessarily one; but him, from his yielding and somewhat feeble character, he viewed rather in the light of a tool, than as one of his active accomplices. Those whom (if anybody) he admitted to an unreserved participation in his counsels, were two only, the great Lama among the Kalmucks, and his own father-in-law, Erempel, a ruling prince of some tribe in the neighbourhood of the Caspian Sea, recommended to his favour, not so much by any strength of talent corresponding to the occasion, as by his blind devotion to himself, and his passionate anxiety to promote the elevation of his daughter and

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his son-in-law to the throne of a sovereign prince. A titular prince Zebek already was: but this dignity, without the substantial accompaniment of a sceptre, seemed but an empty sound to both of these ambitious rebels. The other accomplice, whose name was Loosan-Dchaltzan, and whose rank was that of Lama, or Kalmuck pontiff, was a person of far more distinguished pretensions; he had something of the same gloomy and terrific pride which marked the character of Zebek himself, manifesting also the same energy, accompanied by the same unfaltering cruelty, and a natural facility of dissimulation even more profound. It was by this man that the other question was settled, as to the time for giving effect to their designs. His own pontifical character had suggested to him, that, in order to strengthen their influence with the vast mob of simple-minded men whom they were to lead into a howling wilderness, after persuading them to lay desolate their own ancient hearths, it was indispensable that they should be able, in cases of extremity, to plead the express sanction of God for their entire enterprise. This could only be done by addressing themselves to the great head of their religion, the Dalai-Lama of Tibet. Him they easily persuaded to countenance their schemes: and an oracle was delivered solemnly at Tibet, to the effect that no ultimate prosperity would attend this great Exodus unless it were pursued through the years of the *tiger* and the *hare*. Now, the Kalmuck custom is to distinguish their years by

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attaching to each a denomination taken from one of twelve animals, the exact order of succession being absolutely fixed, so that the cycle revolves of course through a period of a dozen years. Consequently, if the approaching year of the *tiger* were suffered to escape them, in that case the expedition must be delayed for twelve years more, within which period, even were no other unsavourable changes to arise, it was pretty well foreseen that the Russian Government would take the most effectual means for bridling their vagrant propensities by a ring fence of forts or military posts; to say nothing of the still readier plan for securing their fidelity (a plan already talked of in all quarters), by exacting a large body of hostages selected from the families of the most influential nobles. On these cogent considerations, it was solemnly determined that this terrific experiment should be made in the next year of the *tiger*, which happened to fall upon the Christian year 1771. With respect to the month, there was, unhappily for the Kalmucks, even less latitude allowed to their choice than with respect to the year. It was absolutely necessary, or it was thought so, that the different divisions of the nation which pastured their flocks on both banks of the Wolga, should have the means of effecting an instantaneous junction; because the danger of being intercepted by flying columns of the imperial armies was precisely the greatest at the outset. Now, from the want of bridges, or sufficient river craft for transporting so vast a body of men,

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the sole means which could be depended upon (especially where so many women, children, and camels were concerned), was *ice*: and this, in a state of sufficient firmness, could not be absolutely counted upon before the month of January. Hence it happened that this astonishing Exodus of a whole nation, before so much as a whisper of the design had begun to circulate amongst those whom it most interested, before it was even suspected that any man's wishes pointed in that direction, had been definitively appointed for January of the year 1771. And almost up to the Christmas of 1770, the poor simple Kalmuck herdsmen and their families were going nightly to their peaceful beds, without even dreaming that the *fiat* had already gone forth from their rulers which consigned those quiet abodes, together with the peace and comfort which reigned within them, to a withering desolation, now close at hand.

Meantime war raged on a great scale between Russia and the Sultan; and, until the time arrived for throwing off their vassalage, it was necessary that Oubacha should contribute his usual contingent of martial aid. Nay, it had unfortunately become prudent that he should contribute much more than his usual aid. Human experience gives ample evidence, that in some mysterious and unaccountable way no great design is ever agitated, no matter how few or how faithful may be the participants, but that some presentiment—some dim misgiving—is kindled amongst those whom it

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is chiefly important to blind. And, however it might have happened, certain it is, that already, when as yet no syllable of the conspiracy had been breathed to any man whose very existence was not staked upon its concealment, nevertheless, some vague and uneasy jealousy had arisen in the Russian Cabinet as to the future schemes of the Kalmuck Khan: and very probable it is, that, but for the war then raging, and the consequent prudence of conciliating a very important vassal, or, at least, of abstaining from what would powerfully alienate him, even at that moment such measures would have been adopted as must for ever have intercepted the Kalmuck schemes. Slight as were the jealousies of the Imperial Court, they had not escaped the Machiavelian eyes of Zebek and the Lama. And under their guidance, Oubacha, bending to the circumstances of the moment, and meeting the jealousy of the Russian Court with a policy corresponding to their own, strove by unusual zeal to efface the Czarina's unfavourable impressions. He enlarged the scale of his contributions, and *that* so prodigiously, that he absolutely carried to head-quarters a force of 35,000 cavalry fully equipped; some go farther, and rate the amount beyond 40,000; but the smaller estimate is, at all events, *within* the truth.

With this magnificent array of cavalry, heavy as well as light, the Khan went into the field under great expectations; and these he more than realized. Having the good fortune to be concerned with so ill-organized and disorderly

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a description of force as that which at all times composed the bulk of a Turkish army, he carried victory along with his banners; gained many partial successes; and at last, in a pitched battle, overthrew the Turkish force opposed to him with a loss of 5000 men left upon the field.

These splendid achievements seemed likely to operate in various ways against the impending revolt. Oubacha had now a strong motive, in the martial glory acquired, for continuing his connection with the empire in whose service he had won it, and by whom only it could be fully appreciated. He was now a great marshal of a great empire, one of the Paladins around the imperial throne; in China he would be nobody, or (worse than that) a mendicant alien, prostrate at the feet, and soliciting the precarious alms, of a prince with whom he had no connection. Besides, it might reasonably be expected that the Czarina, grateful for the really efficient aid given by the Tartar prince, would confer upon him such eminent rewards as might be sufficient to anchor his hopes upon Russia, and to wean him from every possible seduction. These were the obvious suggestions of prudence and good sense to every man who stood neutral in the case. But they were disappointed. The Czarina knew her obligations to the Khan, but she did not acknowledge them. Wherefore? That is a mystery, perhaps never to be explained. So it was, however. The Khan went unhonoured; no *ukase* ever proclaimed his merits; and perhaps, had

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he even been abundantly recompensed by Russia, there were others who would have defeated these tendencies to reconciliation. Erem-pel, Zebek, and Loosang the Lama, were pledged life-deep to prevent any accommodation ; and their efforts were unfortunately seconded by those of their deadliest enemies. In the Russian Court there were at that time some great nobles pre-occupied with feelings of hatred and blind malice towards the Kalmucks, quite as strong as any which the Kalmucks could harbour towards Russia, and not, perhaps, so well founded. Just as much as the Kalmucks hated the Russian yoke, their galling assumption of authority, the marked air of disdain, as towards a nation of ugly, stupid, and filthy barbarians, which too generally marked the Russian bearing and language ; but, above all, the insolent contempt, or even outrages, which the Russian governors or great military commandants tolerated in their followers towards the barbarous religion and superstitious mummeries of the Kalmuck priesthood—precisely in that extent did the ferocity of the Russian resentment, and their wrath at seeing the trampled worm turn or attempt a feeble retaliation, react upon the unfortunate Kalmucks. At this crisis, it is probable that envy and wounded pride, upon witnessing the splendid victories of Oubacha and Momotbacha over the Turks and Bashkirs, contributed strength to the Russian irritation. And it must have been through the intrigues of those nobles about her person, who chiefly smarted under these feelings, that the Czarina

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could ever have lent herself to the unwise and ungrateful policy pursued at this critical period towards the Kalmuck Khan. That Czarina was no longer Elizabeth Petrowna, it was Catherine II—a princess who did not often err so injuriously (injuriously for herself as much as for others) in the measures of her government. She had soon ample reason for repenting of her false policy. Meantime, how much it must have co-operated with the other motives previously acting upon Oubacha in sustaining his determination to revolt; and how powerfully it must have assisted the efforts of all the Tartar chieftains in preparing the minds of their people to feel the necessity of this difficult enterprise, by arming their pride and their suspicions against the Russian Government, through the keenness of their sympathy with the wrongs of their insulted prince, may be readily imagined. It is a fact, and it has been confessed by candid Russians themselves, when treating of this great dismemberment, that the conduct of the Russian Cabinet throughout the period of suspense and during the crisis of hesitation in the Kalmuck Council, was exactly such as was most desirable for the purposes of the conspirators; it was such, in fact, as to set the seal to all their machinations, by supplying distinct evidences and official vouchers for what could otherwise have been, at the most, matters of doubtful suspicion and indirect presumption.

Nevertheless, in the face of all these arguments, and even allowing their weight so far as not at all to deny the injustice or the im-

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policy of the imperial ministers, it is contended by many persons who have reviewed the affair with a command of all the documents bearing on the case, more especially the letters or minutes of council subsequently discovered in the handwriting of Zebek-Dorchi, and the important evidence of the Russian captive Weseloff, who was carried off by the Kalmucks in their flight, that beyond all doubt Oubacha was powerless for any purpose of impeding or even of delaying the revolt. He himself, indeed, was under religious obligations of the most terrific solemnity never to flinch from the enterprise, or even to slacken in his zeal: for Zebek-Dorchi, distrusting the firmness of his resolution under any unusual pressure of alarm or difficulty, had, in the very earliest stage of the conspiracy, availed himself of the Khan's well-known superstition to engage him, by means of previous concert with the priests and their head the Lama, in some dark and mysterious rites of consecration, terminating in oaths under such terrific sanctions as no Kalmuck would have courage to violate. As far, therefore, as regarded the personal share of the Khan in what was to come, Zebek was entirely at his ease; he knew him to be so deeply pledged by religious terrors to the prosecution of the conspiracy, that no honours within the Czarina's gift could have possibly shaken his adhesion: and then, as to threats from the same quarter, he knew them to be sealed against those fears by others of a gloomier character, and better adapted to his peculiar

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But the time was now rapidly approaching for the mighty experiment. The day was drawing near on which the signal was to be given for raising the standard of revolt, and by a combined movement on both sides of the Wolga for spreading the smoke of one vast conflagration, that should wrap in a common blaze their own huts and the stately cities of their enemies, over the breadth and length of those great provinces in which their flocks were dispersed. The year of the *tiger* was now within one little month of its commencement; the fifth morning of that year was fixed for the fatal day when the fortunes and happiness of a whole nation were to be put upon the hazard of a dicer's throw; and as yet that nation was in profound ignorance of the whole plan. The Khan, such was the kindness of his nature, could not bring himself to make the revelation so urgently required. It was clear, however, that this could not be delayed; and Zebek-Dorchi took the task willingly upon himself. But where or how should this notification be made, so as to exclude Russian hearers? After some deliberation, the following plan was adopted:—Couriers, it was contrived, should arrive in furious haste, one upon the heels of another, reporting a sudden inroad of the Kirghises and Bashkirs upon the Kalmuck lands, at a point distant about 120 miles. Thither all the Kalmuck families, according to immemorial custom, were required to send a separate representative; and there accordingly, within three days, all appeared. The distance,

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the solitary ground appointed for the rendezvous, the rapidity of the march, all tended to make it almost certain that no Russian could be present. Zebek-Dorchi then came forward. He did not waste many words upon rhetoric. He unfurled an immense sheet of parchment, visible from the uttermost distance at which any of this vast crowd could stand; the total number amounted to 80,000; all saw, and many heard. They were told of the oppressions of Russia; of her pride and haughty disdain evidenced towards them by a thousand acts; of her contempt for their religion; of her determination to reduce them to absolute slavery; of the preliminary measures she had already taken by erecting forts upon many of the great rivers in their neighbourhood; of the ulterior intentions she thus announced to circumscribe their pastoral lands, until they would all be obliged to renounce their flocks, and to collect in towns like Sarepta, there to pursue mechanical and servile trades of shoemaker, tailor, and weaver, such as the free-born Tartar had always disdained. "Then again," said the subtle prince, "she increases her military levies upon our population every year; we pour out our blood as young men in her defence, or more often in support of her insolent aggressions; and as old men, we reap nothing from our sufferings, nor benefit by our survivorship where so many are sacrificed." At this point of his harangue, Zebek produced several papers (forged, as it is generally believed, by himself and the Lama), containing

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weight in the Tartar councils, and might have given him a far greater, had not his outrageous self-conceit, and his arrogant confidence in his own authority as due chiefly to his personal qualities for command, led him into such harsh displays of power, and menaces so odious to the Tartar pride, as very soon made him an object of their profoundest malice. He had publicly insulted the Khan; and, upon making a communication to him to the effect that some reports began to circulate, and even to reach the Empress, of a design in agitation to fly from the imperial dominions, he had ventured to say, "But this you dare not attempt; I laugh at such rumours; yes, Khan, I laugh at them to the Empress; for you are a chained bear, and that you know". The Khan turned away on his heel with marked disdain; and the Pristaw, foaming at the mouth, continued to utter, amongst those of the Khan's attendants who staid behind, to catch his real sentiments in a moment of unguarded passion, all that the blindest frenzy of rage could suggest to the most presumptuous of fools. It was now ascertained that suspicions *had* arisen; but at the same time it was ascertained that the Pristaw spoke no more than the truth in representing himself to have discredited these suspicions. The fact was, that the mere infatuation of vanity made him believe that nothing could go on undetected by his all-piercing sagacity, and that no rebellion could prosper when rebuked by his commanding presence. The Tartars, therefore, pursued

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their preparations, confiding in the obstinate blindness of the Grand Pristaw as in their perfect safeguard; and such it proved—to his own ruin as well as that of myriads beside.

Christmas arrived; and, a little before that time, courier upon courier came dropping in, one upon the very heels of another, to St. Petersburg, assuring the Czarina that beyond all doubt the Kalmucks were in the very crisis of departure. These despatches came from the Governor of Astrachan, and copies were instantly forwarded to Kichinskoi. Now, it happened, that between this governor—a Russian named Beketoff—and the Pristaw had been an ancient feud. The very name of Beketoff inflamed his resentment; and no sooner did he see that hated name attached to the despatch, than he felt himself confirmed in his former views with tenfold bigotry, and wrote instantly, in terms of the most pointed ridicule, against the new alarmist, pledging his own head upon the visionariness of his alarms. Beketoff, however, was not to be put down by a few hard words, or by ridicule: he persisted in his statements; the Russian Ministry were confounded by the obstinacy of the disputants; and some were beginning even to treat the Governor of Astrachan as a bore, and as the dupe of his own nervous terrors, when the memorable day arrived, the fatal 5th of January, which for ever terminated the dispute, and put a seal upon the earthly hopes and fortunes of unnumbered myriads. The Governor of Astrachan was the first to hear the news.

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Stung by the mixed furies of jealousy, of triumphant vengeance, and of anxious ambition, he sprang into his sledge, and, at the rate of 300 miles a-day, pursued his route to St. Petersburg—rushed into the Imperial presence—announced the total realization of his worst predictions—and upon the confirmation of this intelligence by subsequent despatches, from many different posts on the Wolga, he received an imperial commission to seize the person of his deluded enemy, and to keep him in strict captivity. These orders were eagerly fulfilled, and the unfortunate Kichinskoi soon afterwards expired of grief and mortification in the gloomy solitude of a dungeon—a victim to his own immeasurable vanity, and the blinding self-delusions of a presumption that refused all warning.

The Governor of Astrachan had been but too faithful a prophet. Perhaps even *he* was surprised at the suddenness with which the verification followed his reports. Precisely on the 5th of January, the day so solemnly appointed under religious sanctions by the Lama, the Kalmucks on the east bank of the Wolga were seen at the earliest dawn of day assembling by troops and squadrons, and in the tumultuous movement of some great morning of battle. Tens of thousands continued moving off the ground at every half-hour's interval. Women and children, to the amount of two hundred thousand and upwards, were placed upon waggons, or upon camels, and drew off by masses of twenty thousand at once—placed

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under suitable escorts, and continually swelled in numbers by other outlying bodies of the horde, who kept falling in at various distances upon the first and second day's march. From sixty to eighty thousand of those who were the best mounted staid behind the rest of the tribes, with purposes of devastation and plunder more violent than prudence justified, or the amiable character of the Khan could be supposed to approve. But in this, as in other instances, he was completely overruled by the malignant counsels of Zebek-Dorchi. The first tempest of the desolating fury of the Tartars discharged itself upon their own habitations. But this, as cutting off all infirm looking backward from the hardships of their march, had been thought so necessary a measure by all the chieftains, that even Oubacha himself was the first to authorize the act by his own example. He seized a torch previously prepared with materials the most durable as well as combustible, and steadily applied it to the timbers of his own palace. Nothing was saved from the general wreck except the portable part of the domestic utensils, and that part of the wood-work which could be applied to the manufacture of the long Tartar lances. This chapter in their memorable day's work being finished, and the whole of their villages throughout a district of ten thousand square miles in one simultaneous blaze, the Tartars waited for further orders.

These, it was intended, should have taken a character of valedictory vengeance, and thus

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have left behind to the Czarina a dreadful commentary upon the main motives of their flight. It was the purpose of Zebek-Dorchi that all the Russian towns, churches, and buildings of every description should be given up to pillage and destruction, and such treatment applied to the defenceless inhabitants as might naturally be expected from a fierce people already infuriated by the spectacle of their own outrages, and by the bloody retaliations which they must necessarily have provoked. This part of the tragedy, however, was happily intercepted by a providential disappointment at the very crisis of departure. It has been mentioned already, that the motive for selecting the depth of winter as the season of flight (which otherwise was obviously the very worst possible), had been the impossibility of effecting a junction sufficiently rapid with the tribes on the west of the Wolga, in the absence of bridges, unless by a natural bridge of ice. For this one advantage, the Kalmuck leaders had consented to aggravate by a thousandfold the calamities inevitable to a rapid flight over boundless tracts of country, with women, children, and herds of cattle—for this one single advantage; and yet, after all, it was lost. The reason never has been explained satisfactorily, but the fact was such. Some have said that the signals were not properly concerted for marking the moment of absolute departure—that is, for signifying whether the settled intention of the Eastern Kalmucks might not have been suddenly in-

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terrupted by adverse intelligence. Others have supposed that the ice might not be equally strong on both sides of the river, and might even be generally insecure for the treading of heavy and heavily-laden animals such as camels. But the prevailing notion is, that some accidental movements on the 3rd and 4th of January of Russian troops in the neighbourhood of the Western Kalmucks, though really having no reference to them or their plans, had been construed into certain signs that all was discovered; and that the prudence of the Western chieftains, who, from situation, had never been exposed to those intrigues by which Zebek-Dorchi had practised upon the pride of the Eastern tribes, now stepped in to save their people from ruin. Be the cause what it might, it is certain that the Western Kalmucks were in some way prevented from forming the intended junction with their brethren of the opposite bank; and the result was, that at least one hundred thousand of these Tartars were left behind in Russia. This accident it was which saved their Russian neighbours universally from the desolation which else awaited them. One general massacre and conflagration would assuredly have surprised them, to the utter extermination of their property, their houses, and themselves, had it not been for this disappointment. But the Eastern chieftains did not dare to put to hazard the safety of their brethren under the first impulse of the Czarina's vengeance for so dreadful a tragedy; for, as they we

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aware of too many circumstances by which she might discover the concurrence of the Western people in the general scheme of revolt, they justly feared that she would thence infer their concurrence also in the bloody events which marked its outset.

Little did the Western Kalmucks guess what reasons they also had for gratitude on account of an interposition so unexpected, and which at the moment they so generally deplored. Could they but have witnessed the thousandth part of the sufferings which overtook their Eastern brethren in the first month of their sad flight, they would have blessed Heaven for their own narrow escape; and yet these sufferings of the first month were but a prelude or foretaste comparatively slight of those which afterwards succeeded.

For now began to unroll the most awful series of calamities, and the most extensive, which is anywhere recorded to have visited the sons and daughters of men. It is possible that the sudden inroads of destroying nations, such as the Huns, or the Avars, or the Mongol Tartars, may have inflicted misery as extensive; but there the misery and the desolation would be sudden, like the flight of volleying lightning. Those who were spared at first would generally be spared to the end; those who perished at all would perish at once. It is possible that the French retreat from Moscow may have made some nearer approach to this calamity in duration, though still a feeble and miniature approach; for the French sufferings

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did not commence in good earnest until about one month from the time of leaving Moscow; and though it is true that afterwards the vials of wrath were emptied upon the devoted army for six or seven weeks in succession, yet what is that to this Kalmuck tragedy, which lasted for more than as many months? But the main feature of horror by which the Tartar march was distinguished from the French lies in the accompaniment of women and children. They were both, it is true, with the French army, but not so many as to bear any marked proportion to the total numbers concerned. The French, in short, were merely an army—a host of professional destroyers, whose regular trade was bloodshed, and whose regular element was danger and suffering. But the Tartars were a nation carrying along with them more than two hundred and fifty thousand women and children, utterly unequal, for the most part, to any contest with the calamities before them. The Children of Israel were in the same circumstances as to the accompaniment of their families; but they were released from the pursuit of their enemies in a very early stage of their flight; and their subsequent residence in the Desert was not a march, but a continued halt, and under a continued interposition of Heaven for their comfortable support. Earthquakes, again, however comprehensive in their ravages, are shocks of a moment's duration. A much nearer approach made to the wide range and the long duration of the Kalmuck tragedy may have been in a

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pestilence such as that which visited Athens in the Peloponnesian War, or London in the reign of Charles II. There also the martyrs were counted by myriads, and the period of the desolation was counted by months. But, after all, the total amount of destruction was on a smaller scale; and there was this feature of alleviation to the *conscious* pressure of the calamity—that the misery was withdrawn from public notice into private chambers and hospitals. The siege of Jerusalem by Vespasian and his son, taken in its entire circumstances, comes nearest of all—for breadth and depth of suffering, for duration, for the exasperation of the suffering from without by internal feuds, and, finally, for that last most appalling expression of the furnace-heat of the anguish in its power to extinguish the natural affections even of maternal love. But, after all, each case had circumstances of romantic misery peculiar to itself—circumstances without precedent, and (wherever human nature is ennobled by Christianity), it may be confidently hoped, never to be repeated.

The first point to be reached, before any hope of repose could be encouraged, was the river Jaik. This was not above 300 miles from the main point of departure on the Wolga; and if the march thither was to be a forced one, and a severe one, it was alleged, on the other hand, that the suffering would be the more brief and transient; one summary exertion, not to be repeated, and all was achieved. Forced the march was, and severe

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beyond example: there the forewarning proved correct; but the promised rest proved a mere phantom of the wilderness—a visionary rainbow, which fled before their hope-sick eyes, across these interminable solitudes, for seven months of hardship and calamity, without a pause. Those sufferings, by their very nature, and the circumstances under which they arose, were (like the scenery of the steppes) somewhat monotonous in their colouring and external features; what variety, however, there was, will be most naturally exhibited by tracing historically the successive stages of the general misery, exactly as it unfolded itself under the double agency of weakness still increasing from within, and hostile pressure from without. Viewed in this manner, under the real order of development, it is remarkable that these sufferings of the Tartars, though under the moulding hands of accident, arrange themselves almost with a scenical propriety. They seem combined, as with the skill of an artist; the intensity of the misery advancing regularly with the advances of the march, and the stages of the calamity corresponding to the stages of the route; so that, upon raising the curtain which veils the great catastrophe, we behold one vast climax of anguish, towering upwards by regular gradations, as if constructed artificially for picturesque effect—a result which might not have been surprising had it been reasonable to anticipate the same rate of speed, and even an accelerated rate, as prevailing through the later stages of the expedition.

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fought the day before, in which one entire tribe of Khan's dependants, numbering not less than 9000 fighting men, had perished to the last man. This was the *ouloss*, or clan, called Feka-Zechorr, between whom and the Cossacks there was a feud of ancient standing. In selecting, therefore, the points of attack, on occasion of the present hasty inroad, the Cossack chiefs were naturally eager so to direct their efforts as to combine with the service of the Empress some gratification to their own party hatreds: more especially as the present was likely to be their final opportunity for revenge, if the Kalmuck evasion should prosper. Having, therefore, concentrated as large a body of Cossack cavalry as circumstances allowed, they attacked the hostile *ouloss* with a precipitation which denied to it all means for communicating with Oubacha; for the necessity of commanding an ample range of pasture, to meet the necessities of their vast flocks and herds, had separated this *ouloss* from the Khan's head-quarters by an interval of 80 miles; and thus it was, and not from oversight, that it came to be thrown entirely upon its own resources. These had proved insufficient: retreat, from the exhausted state of their horses and camels, no less than from the prodigious encumbrances of their live stock, was absolutely out of the question: quarter was disdained on the one side, and would not have been granted on the other: and thus it had happened that the setting sun of that one day (the thirteenth from the first opening of the

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revolt) threw his parting rays upon the final agonies of an ancient *onloss*, stretched upon a bloody field, who on that day's dawning had held and styled themselves an independent nation.

Universal consternation was diffused through the wide borders of the Khan's encampment by this disastrous intelligence; not so much on account of the numbers slain, or the total extinction of a powerful ally, as because the position of the Cossack force was likely to put to hazard the future advances of the Kalmucks, or at least to retard and hold them in check until the heavier columns of the Russian army should arrive upon their flanks. The siege of Koulagina was instantly raised; and that signal, so fatal to the happiness of the women and their children, once again resounded through the tents—the signal for flight, and this time for a flight more rapid than ever. About 150 miles ahead of their present position, there arose a tract of hilly country, forming a sort of margin to the vast sea-like expanse of champaign savannahs, steppes, and occasionally of sandy deserts, which stretched away on each side of this margin both eastwards and westwards. Pretty nearly in the centre of this hilly range lay a narrow defile, through which passed the nearest and the most practicable route to the river Torgai (the further bank of which river offered the next great station of security for a general halt). It was the more essential to gain this pass before the Cossacks, inasmuch as not only would the delay in forc-

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powers of endurance seemed equally adapted to cold and to heat. The second morning, however, brought an alleviation to the distress. Snow had begun to fall; and though not deep at present, it was easily foreseen that it soon would be so; and that, as a halt would in that case become unavoidable, no plan could be better than that of staying where they were; especially as the same cause would check the advance of the Cossacks. Here, then, was the last interval of comfort which gleamed upon the unhappy nation during their whole migration. For ten days the snow continued to fall with little intermission. At the end of that time keen bright frosty weather succeeded; the drifting had ceased; in three days the smooth expanse became firm enough to support the treading of the camels; and the flight was recommenced. But during the halt much domestic comfort had been enjoyed; and for the last time universal plenty. The cows and oxen had perished in such vast numbers on the previous marches, that an order was now issued to turn what remained to account by slaughtering the whole, and salting whatever part should be found to exceed the immediate consumption. This measure led to a scene of general banqueting and even of festivity amongst all who were not incapacitated for joyous emotions by distress of mind, by grief for the unhappy experience of the few last days, and by anxiety for the too gloomy future. Seventy thousand persons of all ages had already perished; exclusively of the many thousand

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allies who had been cut down by the Cossack sabre. And the losses in reversion were likely to be many more. For rumours began now to arrive from all quarters, by the mounted couriers whom the Khan had despatched to the rear and to each flank as well as in advance, that large masses of the imperial troops were converging from all parts of Central Asia to the fords of the river Torgai, as the most convenient point for intercepting the flying tribes; and it was by this time well known that a powerful division was close in their rear, and was retarded only by the numerous artillery which had been judged necessary to support their operations. New motives were thus daily arising for quickening the motions of the wretched Kalmucks, and for exhausting those who were already but too much exhausted.

It was not until the 2d day of February that the Khan's advanced guard came in sight of Ouchim, the defile among the hills of Mougalchares, in which they anticipated so bloody an opposition from the Cossacks. A pretty large body of these light cavalry had, in fact, pre-occupied the pass by some hours; but the Khan having two great advantages—namely, a strong body of infantry, who had been conveyed by sections of five on about 200 camels, and some pieces of light artillery which he had not yet been forced to abandon—soon began to make a serious impression upon this unsupported detachment; and they would probably at any rate have retired; but at the very

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moment when they were making some dispositions in that view, Zebek-Dorchi appeared upon their rear with a body of trained riflemen, who had distinguished themselves in the war with Turkey. These men had contrived to crawl unobserved over the cliffs which skirted the ravine, availing themselves of the dry beds of the summer torrents, and other inequalities of the ground, to conceal their movement. Disorder and trepidation ensued instantly in the Cossack files; the Khan, who had been waiting with the *élite* of his heavy cavalry, charged furiously upon them; total overthrow followed to the Cossacks, and a slaughter such as in some measure avenged the recent bloody extermination of their allies, the ancient *ouloss* of Feka-Zechorr. The slight horses of the Cossacks were unable to support the weight of heavy Polish dragoons and a body of trained *cameleers* (that is, cuirassiers mounted on camels); hardy they were, but not strong, nor a match for their antagonists in weight; and their extraordinary efforts through the last few days to gain their present position, had greatly diminished their powers for effecting an escape. Very few, in fact, *did* escape; and the bloody day at Ouchim became as memorable amongst the Cossacks as that which, about twenty days before, had signalized the complete annihilation of the Feka-Zechorr.

The road was now open to the river Irgitch, and as yet even far beyond it to the Torgau; but how long this state of things would continue, was every day more doubtful. Certain

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intelligence was now received that a large Russian army, well appointed in every arm, was advancing upon the Torgau, under the command of General Traubenberg. This officer was to be joined on his route by ten thousand Bashkirs, and pretty nearly the same amount of Kirghises—both hereditary enemies of the Kalmucks, both exasperated to a point of madness by the bloody trophies which Oubacha and Momotbacha had, in late years, won from such of their compatriots as served under the Sultan. The Czarina's yoke these wild nations bore with submissive patience, but not the hands by which it had been imposed; and, accordingly, catching with eagerness at the present occasion offered to their vengeance, they sent an assurance to the Czarina of their perfect obedience to her commands, and at the same time a message significantly declaring in what spirit they meant to execute them, viz. "that they would not trouble her Majesty with prisoners".

Here then arose, as before with the Cos-sacks, a race for the Kalmucks with the regular armies of Russia, and concurrently with nations as fierce and semi-humanized as themselves, besides that they had been stung into three-fold activity by the furies of mortified pride and military abasement, under the eyes of the Turkish Sultan. The forces, and more especially the artillery, of Russia were far too overwhelming to bear the thought of a regular opposition in pitched battles, even with a less dilapidated state of their resources than they

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could reasonably expect at the period of their arrival on the Torgau. In their speed lay their only hope—in strength of foot, as before, and not in strength of arm. Onward, therefore, the Kalmucks pressed, marking the lines of their wide-extending march over the sad solitudes of the steppes by a never-ending chain of corpses. The old and the young, the sick man on his couch, the mother with her baby—all were dropping fast. Sights such as these, with the many rueful aggravations incident to the helpless condition of infancy—of disease and of female weakness abandoned to the wolves amidst a howling wilderness, continued to track their course through a space of full two thousand miles; for so much, at the least, it was likely to prove, including the circuits to which they were often compelled by rivers or hostile tribes, from the point of starting on the Wolga, until they could reach their destined halting ground on the east bank of the Torgau. For the first seven weeks of this march their sufferings had been embittered by the excessive severity of the cold; and every night—so long as wood was to be had for fires, either from the lading of the camels, or from the desperate sacrifice of their baggage-waggons, or (as occasionally happened) from the forests which skirted the banks of the many rivers which crossed their path—no spectacle was more frequent than that of a circle, composed of men, women, and children, gathered by hundreds round a central fire, all dead and stiff at the return of morning light.

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Myriads were left behind from pure exhaustion, of whom none had a chance, under the combined evils which beset them, of surviving through the next twenty-four hours. Frost, however, and snow at length ceased to persecute; the vast extent of the march at length brought them into more genial latitudes, and the unusual duration of the march was gradually bringing them into more genial seasons of the year. Two thousand miles had at last been traversed; February, March, April, were gone; the balmy month of May had opened, vernal sights and sounds came from every side to comfort the heart-weary travellers; and at last, in the latter end of May, crossing the Torgau, they took up a position where they hoped to find liberty to repose themselves for many weeks in comfort as well as in security, and to draw such supplies from the fertile neighbourhood as might restore their shattered forces to a condition for executing, with less of wreck and ruin, the large remainder of the journey.

Yes; it was true that two thousand miles of wandering had been completed, but in a period of nearly five months, and with the terrific sacrifice of at least two hundred and fifty thousand souls, to say nothing of herds and flocks past all reckoning. These had all perished: ox, cow, horse, mule, ass, sheep, or goat, not one survived—only the camels. These arid and adust creatures, looking like the mummies of some antediluvian animals, without the affections or sensibilities of flesh

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and blood—these only still erected their speaking eyes to the eastern heavens, and had to all appearance come out from this long tempest of trial unscathed and hardly diminished. The Khan, knowing how much he was individually answerable for the misery which had been sustained, must have wept tears even more bitter than those of Xerxes, when he threw his eyes over the myriads whom he had assembled: for the tears of Xerxes were unmixed with remorse. Whatever amends were in his power the Khan resolved to make, by sacrifices to the general good of all personal regards; and accordingly, even at this point of their advance, he once more deliberately brought under review the whole question of the revolt. The question was formally debated before the Council, whether, even at this point, they should untread their steps, and, throwing themselves upon the Czarina's mercy, return to their old allegiance: In that case, Oubacha professed himself willing to become the scapegoat for the general transgression. This, he argued, was no fantastic scheme, but even easy of accomplishment; for the unlimited and sacred power of the Khan, so well known to the Empress, made it absolutely iniquitous to attribute any separate responsibility to the people—upon the Khan rested the guilt, upon the Khan would descend the imperial vengeance. This proposal was applauded for its generosity, but was energetically opposed by Zebek-Dorchi. Were they to lose the whole journey of two thousand miles? Was their

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misery to perish without fruit? True it was that they had yet reached only the half-way house; but, in that respect, the motives were evenly balanced for retreat or for advance. Either way they would have pretty nearly the same distance to traverse, but with this difference—that, forwards, their route lay through lands comparatively fertile; backwards, through a blasted wilderness, rich only in memorials of their sorrow, and hideous to Kalmuck eyes by the trophies of their calamity. Besides, though the Empress might accept an excuse for the past, would she the less forbear to suspect for the future? The Czarina's *pardon* they might obtain, but could they ever hope to recover her *confidence*? Doubtless there would now be a standing presumption against them, an immortal ground of jealousy; and a jealous government would be but another name for a harsh one. Finally, whatever motives there ever had been for the revolt surely remained unimpaired by anything that had occurred. In reality, the revolt was, after all, no revolt, but (strictly speaking) a return to their old allegiance; since, not above one hundred and fifty years ago (viz., in the year 1616), their ancestors had revolted from the Emperor of China. They had now tried both governments; and for them China was the land of promise, and Russia the house of bondage.

Spite, however, of all that Zebek could say or do, the yearning of the people was strongly in behalf of the Khan's proposal; the pardon of their prince, they persuaded themselves,

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would be readily conceded by the Empress: and there is little doubt that they would at this time have thrown themselves gladly upon the imperial mercy; when suddenly all was defeated by the arrival of two envoys from Traubenberg. This general had reached the fortress of Orsk, after a very painful march, on the 12th of April; thence he set forwards towards Oriembourg, which he reached upon the 1st of June, having been joined on his route at various times through the month of May by the Kirghises and a corps of ten thousand Bashkirs. From Oriembourg he sent forward his official offers to the Khan, which were harsh and peremptory, holding out no specific stipulations as to pardon or impunity, and exacting unconditional submission as the preliminary price of any cessation from military operations. The personal character of Traubenberg, which was anything but energetic, and the condition of his army, disorganized in a great measure by the length and severity of the march, made it probable that, with a little time for negotiation, a more conciliatory tone would have been assumed. But, unhappily for all parties, sinister events occurred in the meantime, such as effectually put an end to every hope of the kind.

The two envoys sent forward by Traubenberg had reported to this officer that a distance of only ten days' march lay between his own head-quarters and those of the Khan. Upon this fact transpiring, the Kirghises, by their prince Nourali, and the Bashkirs, entreated the

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Russian general to advance without delay. Once having placed his cannon in position, so as to command the Kalmuck camp, the fate of the rebel Khan and his people would be in his own hands: and they would themselves form his advanced guard. Traubenberg, however (why has not been certainly explained), refused to march, grounding his refusal upon the condition of his army, and their absolute need of refreshment. Long and fierce was the altercation; but at length, seeing no chance of prevailing, and dreading above all other events the escape of their detested enemy, the ferocious Bashkirs went off in a body by forced marches. In six days they reached the Torgan, crossed by swimming their horses, and fell upon the Kalmucks, who were dispersed for many a league in search of food or provender for their camels. The first day's action was one vast succession of independent skirmishes, diffused over a field of thirty to forty miles in extent; one party often breaking up into three or four, and again (according to the accidents of ground) three or four blending into one; flight and pursuit, rescue and total overthrow, going on simultaneously, under all varieties of form, in all quarters of the plain. The Bashkirs had found themselves obliged, by the scattered state of the Kalmucks, to split up into innumerable sections; and thus, for some hours, it had been impossible for the most practised eye to collect the general tendency of the day's fortune. Both the Khan and Zebek-Dorchi were at one moment made prisoners, and more

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a ready means of commencing it without raising suspicion, the Khan mentioned to Mr. Weseloff that he had just then received a message from the Hetman of the Bashkirs, soliciting a private interview on the banks of the Torgau at a spot pointed out: that interview was arranged for the coming night; and Mr. Weseloff might go in the Khan's *suite*, which on either side was not to exceed three persons. Weseloff was a prudent man, acquainted with the world, and he read treachery in the very outline of this scheme, as stated by the Khan—treachery against the Khan's person. He mused a little, and then communicated so much of his suspicions to the Khan as might put him on his guard; but, upon further consideration, he begged leave to decline the honour of accompanying the Khan. The fact was, that three Kalmucks, who had strong motives for returning to their countrymen on the west bank of the Wolga, guessing the intentions of Weseloff, had offered to join him in his escape. These men the Khan would probably find himself obliged to countenance in their project; so that it became a point of honour with Weseloff to conceal their intentions, and therefore to accomplish the evasion from the camp (of which the first steps only would be hazardous), without risking the notice of the Khan.

The district in which they were now encamped abounded through many hundred miles with wild horses of a docile and beautiful breed. Each of the four fugitives had caught

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from seven to ten of these spirited creatures in the course of the last few days: this raised no suspicion, for the rest of the Kalmucks had been making the same sort of provision against the coming toils of their remaining route to China. These horses were secured by halters, and hidden about dusk in the thickets which lined the margin of the river. To these thickets, about ten at night, the four fugitives repaired; they took a circuitous path, which drew them as little as possible within danger of challenge from any of the outposts or of the patrols which had been established on the quarters where the Bashkirs lay; and in three-quarters of an hour they reached the rendezvous. The moon had now risen, the horses were unfastened, and they were in the act of mounting, when suddenly the deep silence of the woods was disturbed by a violent uproar, and the clashing of arms. Weseloff fancied that he heard the voice of the Khan shouting for assistance. He remembered the communication made by that prince in the morning; and requesting his companions to support him, he rode off in the direction of the sound. A very short distance brought him to an open glade within the wood, where he beheld four men contending with a party of at least nine or ten. Two of the four were dismounted at the very instant of Weseloff's arrival; one of these he recognized almost certainly as the Khan, who was fighting hand to hand, but at great disadvantage, with two of the adverse horsemen. Seeing that no time was to be lost,

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pursuit, they proceeded less rapidly; though still with a velocity which staggered the belief of Weseloff's friends in after years. He was, however, a man of high principle, and always adhered firmly to the details of his printed report. One of the circumstances there stated is, that they continued to pursue the route by which the Kalmucks had fled, never for an instant finding any difficulty in tracing it by the skeletons and other memorials of their calamities. In particular, he mentions vast heaps of money as part of the valuable property which it had been found necessary to sacrifice. These heaps were found lying still untouched in the deserts. From these Weseloff and his companions took as much as they could conveniently carry; and this it was, with the price of their beautiful horses, which they afterwards sold at one of the Russian military settlements for about £15 a-piece, which eventually enabled them to pursue their journey in Russia. This journey, as regarded Weseloff in particular, was closed by a tragical catastrophe. He was at that time young, and the only child of a doating mother. Her affliction under the violent abduction of her son had been excessive, and probably had undermined her constitution. Still she had supported it. Weseloff, giving way to the natural impulses of his filial affection, had imprudently posted through Russia to his mother's house without warning of his approach. He rushed precipitately into her presence; and she, who had stood the shocks of sorrow, was

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found unequal to the shock of joy too sudden and too acute. She died upon the spot.

I now revert to the final scenes of the Kal-muck flight. These it would be useless to pursue circumstantially through the whole two thousand miles of suffering which remained; for the character of that suffering was even more monotonous than on the former half of the flight, but also more severe. Its main elements were excessive heat, with the accompaniments of famine and thirst, but aggravated at every step by the murderous attacks of their cruel enemies the Bashkirs and the Kirghises.

These people, "more fell than anguish, hunger, or the sea", stuck to the unhappy Kal-mucks like a swarm of enraged hornets. And very often, whilst *they* were attacking them in the rear, their advanced parties and flanks were attacked with almost equal fury by the people of the country which they were traversing; and with good reason, since the law of self-preservation had now obliged the fugitive Tartars to plunder provisions, and to forage wherever they passed. In this respect their condition was a constant oscillation of wretchedness; for sometimes, pressed by grinding famine, they took a circuit of perhaps a hundred miles, in order to strike into a land rich in the comforts of life; but in such a land they were sure to find a crowded population, of which every arm was raised in unrelenting hostility, with all the advantages of local knowledge, and with constant pre-occupation of all the defensible

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positions, mountain passes, or bridges. Sometimes, again, wearied out with this mode of suffering, they took a circuit of perhaps a hundred miles, in order to strike into a land with few or no inhabitants. But in such a land they were sure to meet absolute starvation. Then, again, whether with or without this plague of starvation, whether with or without this plague of hostility in front, whatever might be the “fierce varieties” of their misery in this respect, no rest ever came to their unhappy rear; *post equitem sedet atra cura*; it was a torment like the undying worm of conscience. And, upon the whole, it presented a spectacle altogether unprecedented in the history of mankind. Private and personal malignity is not unfrequently immortal; but rare indeed is it to find the same pertinacity of malice in a nation. And what embittered the interest was, that the malice was reciprocal. Thus far the parties met upon equal terms; but that equality only sharpened the sense of their dire inequality as to other circumstances. The Bashkirs were ready to fight “from morn to dewy eve”. The Kalmucks, on the contrary, were always obliged to run; was it from their enemies as creatures whom they feared? No; but towards their friends—towards that final haven of China—as what was hourly implored by the prayers of their wives, and the tears of their children. But, though they fled unwillingly, too often they fled in vain—being unwillingly recalled. There lay the torment. Every day the Bashkirs fell upon them; every day the same unprofit-

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able battle was renewed; as a matter of course, the Kalmucks recalled part of their advanced guard to fight them; every day the battle raged for hours, and uniformly with the same result. For no sooner did the Bashkirs find themselves too heavily pressed, and that the Kalmuck march had been retarded by some hours, than they retired into the boundless deserts, where all pursuit was hopeless. But if the Kalmucks resolved to press forward, regardless of their enemies, in that case their attacks became so fierce and overwhelming, that the general safety seemed likely to be brought into question; nor could any effectual remedy be applied to the case, even for each separate day, except by a most embarrassing halt, and by countermarches, that, to men in their circumstances, were almost worse than death. It will not be surprising, that the irritation of such a systematic persecution, superadded to a previous and hereditary hatred, and accompanied by the stinging consciousness of utter impotence as regarded all effectual vengeance, should gradually have inflamed the Kalmuck animosity into the wildest expression of downright madness and frenzy. Indeed, long before the frontiers of China were approached, the hostility of both sides had assumed the appearance much more of a warfare amongst wild beasts, than amongst creatures acknowledging the restraints of reason or the claims of a common nature. The spectacle became too atrocious; it was that of a host of lunatics pursued by a host of fiends.

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On a fine morning in the early autumn of the year 1771, Kien Long, the Emperor of China, was pursuing his amusements in a wild frontier district lying on the outside of the Great Wall. For many hundred square leagues the country was desolate of inhabitants, but rich in woods of ancient growth, and overrun with game of every description. In a central spot of this solitary region, the Emperor had built a gorgeous hunting lodge, to which he resorted annually for recreation and relief from the cares of government. Led onwards in pursuit of game, he had rambled to a distance of 200 miles or more from this lodge, followed at a little distance by a sufficient military escort, and every night pitching his tent in a different situation, until at length he had arrived on the very margin of the vast central deserts of Asia. Here he was standing by accident at an opening of his pavilion, enjoying the morning sunshine, when suddenly to the westwards there arose a vast cloudy vapour, which by degrees expanded, mounted, and seemed to be slowly diffusing itself over the whole face of the heavens. By and by this vast sheet of mist began to thicken towards the horizon, and to roll forward in billowy volumes. The Emperor's suite assembled from all quarters. The silver trumpets were sounded in the rear, and from all the glades and forest avenues began to trot forward towards the pavilion the yagers—half cavalry, half huntsmen—who composed the imperial escort. Conjecture was on the stretch to divine the cause of this phenomenon, and

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the interest continually increased, in proportion as simple curiosity gradually deepened into the anxiety of uncertain danger. At first it had been imagined that some vast troops of deer, or other wild animals of the chase, had been disturbed in their forest haunts by the Emperor's movements, or possibly by wild beasts prowling for prey, and might be fetching a compass by way of re-entering the forest grounds at some remoter points secure from molestation. But this conjecture was dissipated by the slow increase of the cloud, and the steadiness of its motion. In the course of two hours the vast phenomenon had advanced to a point which was judged to be within five miles of the spectators, though all calculations of distance were difficult, and often fallacious, when applied to the endless expanses of the Tartar deserts. Through the next hour, during which the gentle morning breeze had a little freshened, the dusty vapour had developed itself far and wide into the appearance of huge aerial draperies, hanging in mighty volumes from the sky to the earth; and at particular points, where the eddies of the breeze acted upon the pendulous skirts of these aerial curtains, rents were perceived, sometimes taking the form of regular arches, portals, and windows, through which began dimly to gleam the heads of camels "indorsed" with human beings—and at intervals the moving of men and horses in tumultuous array—and then through other openings or vistas at far distant points the flashing of polished arms. But sometimes,

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standing, and therefore with a distance continually increasing. Those who knew the country judged that the Kalmucks were making for a large fresh-water lake about seven or eight miles distant; they were right; and to that point the imperial cavalry was ordered up; and it was precisely in that spot, and about three hours after, and at noonday on the 8th of September, that the great Exodus of the Kalmuck Tartars was brought to a final close, and with a scene of such memorable and hellish fury, as formed an appropriate winding up to an expedition in all its parts and details so awfully disastrous. The Emperor was not personally present, or at least he saw whatever he *did* see from too great a distance to discriminate its individual features; but he records in his written memorial the report made to him of this scene by some of his own officers.

The lake of Tengis, near the dreadful desert of Kobi, lay in a hollow amongst hills of a moderate height, ranging generally from two to three thousand feet high. About eleven o'clock in the forenoon, the Chinese cavalry reached the summit of a road which led through a cradle-like dip in the mountains right down upon the margin of the lake. From this pass, elevated about two thousand feet above the level of the water, they continued to descend, by a very winding and difficult road, for an hour and a half; and during the whole of this descent they were compelled to be inactive spectators of the fiendish spectacle below. The Kalmucks, reduced by this time from about

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six hundred thousand souls to two hundred and sixty thousand, and after enduring for so long a time the miseries I have previously described — outrageous heat, famine, and the destroying scimitar of the Kirghises and the Bashkirs—had for the last ten days been traversing a hideous desert, where no vestiges were seen of vegetation, and no drop of water could be found. Camels and men were already so overladen, that it was a mere impossibility that they should carry a tolerable sufficiency for the passage of this frightful wilderness. On the eighth day, the wretched daily allowance, which had been continually diminishing, failed entirely; and thus, for two days of insupportable fatigue, the horrors of thirst had been carried to the fiercest extremity. Upon this last morning, at the sight of the hills and the forest scenery, which announced to those who acted as guides the neighbourhood of the lake of Tengis, all the people rushed along with maddening eagerness to the anticipated solace. The day grew hotter and hotter, the people more and more exhausted, and gradually, in the general rush forwards to the lake, all discipline and command were lost—all attempts to preserve a rearguard were neglected—the wild Bashkirs rode in amongst the encumbered people, and slaughtered them by wholesale, and almost without resistance. Screams and tumultuous shouts proclaimed the progress of the massacre; but none heeded—none halted; all alike, pauper or noble, continued to rush on with maniacal haste to the waters—all with

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lake, at its lower end, became one vast seething caldron of human bloodshed and carnage. The Chinese cavalry had reached the foot of the hills: the Bashkirs, attentive to *their* movements, had formed; skirmishes had been fought: and, with a quick sense that the contest was hence-forwards rapidly becoming hopeless, the Bashkirs and Kirghises began to retire. The pursuit was not as vigorous as the Kalmuck hatred would have desired. But, at the same time, the very gloomiest hatred could not but find, in their own dreadful experience of the Asiatic deserts, and in the certainty that these wretched Bashkirs had to repeat that same experience a second time, for thousands of miles, as the price exacted by a retributary Providence for their vindictive cruelty—not the very gloomiest of the Kalmucks, or the least reflecting, but found in all this a retaliatory chastisement more complete and absolute than any which their swords and lances could have obtained, or human vengeance have devised.

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Here ends the tale of the Kalmuck wanderings in the Desert; for any subsequent marches which awaited them were neither long nor painful. Every possible alleviation and refreshment for their exhausted bodies had been already provided by Kien Long with the most princely munificence; and lands of great fertility were immediately assigned to them in ample extent along the river Ily, not very far from the point at which they had first emerged from the wilderness of Kobi. But the beneficent

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attention of the Chinese Emperor may be best stated in his own words, as translated into French by one of the Jesuit missionaries:—  
“La nation des Torgotes (*savoir les Kalmugnes*) arriva à Ily, touté délabrée, n’ayant ni de quoi vivre, ni de quoi se vêtir. Je l’avais prévu; et j’ayais ordonné de faire en tout genre les provisions nécessaires pour pouvoir les secourir promptement: c’est ce qui a été exécuté. On a fait la division des terres; et on a assigné à chaque famille une portion suffisante pour pouvoir servir à son entretien, soit en la cultivant, soit en y nourrissant des bestiaux. On a donné à chaque particulier des étoffes pour l’habiller, des grains pour se nourrir pendant l’espace d’une année, des ustensiles pour le ménage, et d’autres choses nécessaires: et outre cela plusieurs onces d’argent, pour se pourvoir de ce qu’on aurait pu oublier. On a désigné des lieux particuliers, fertiles en pâturages; et on leur a donné des bœufs, moutons, &c., pour qu’ils pussent dans la suite travailler par euxmêmes à leur entretien et à leur bienêtre.”

These are the words of the Emperor himself, speaking in his own person of his own parental cares; but another Chinese, treating the same subject, records the munificence of this prince in terms which proclaim still more forcibly the disinterested generosity which prompted, and the delicate considerateness which conducted this extensive bounty. He has been speaking of the Kalmucks, and he goes on thus:—“Lorsqu’ils arrivèrent sur nos frontières (au nombre de plusieurs centaines

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muck people. The consequence was, that he adopted the cause of Oubacha, and repressed the pretensions of Zebek-Dorchi, who, on his part, so deeply resented this discountenance to his ambitious projects, that, in conjunction with other chiefs, he had the presumption even to weave nets of treason against the Emperor himself. Plots were laid, were detected, were baffled; counter-plots were constructed upon the same basis, and with the benefit of the opportunities thus offered.

Finally, Zebek-Dorchi was invited to the imperial lodge, together with all his accomplices; and under the skilful management of the Chinese nobles in the Emperor's establishment, the murderous artifices of these Tartar chieftains were made to recoil upon themselves; and the whole of them perished by assassination at a great imperial banquet. For the Chinese morality is exactly of that kind which approves in everything the *lex talionis*:—

“Lex nec justior ulla est (as they think)  
Quam necis artifices arte perire sua”.

So perished Zedek-Dorchi, the author and originator of the great Tartar Exodus. Oubacha, meantime, and his people, were gradually recovering from the effects of their misery, and repairing their losses. Peace and prosperity, under the gentle rule of a fatherly lord paramount, redawned upon the tribes: their household *larks*, after so harsh a translation to distant climates, found again a happy reinstatement in what had in fact been their primitive abodes:

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they found themselves settled in quiet sylvan scenes, rich in all the luxuries of life, and endowed with the perfect loveliness of Arcadian beauty. But from the hills of this favoured land, and even from the level grounds as they approached its western border, they still look out upon that fearful wilderness which once beheld a nation in agony—the utter extirpation of nearly half a million from amongst its numbers, and, for the remainder, a storm of misery so fierce, that in the end (as happened also at Athens during the Peloponnesian war, from a different form of misery) very many lost their memory; all records of their past life were wiped out as with a sponge—utterly erased and cancelled: and many others lost their reason; some in a gentle form of pensive melancholy, some in a more restless form of feverish delirium and nervous agitation, and others in the fixed forms of tempestuous mania, raving frenzy, or moping idiocy. Two great commemorative monuments arose in after years to mark the depth and permanence of the awe—the sacred and reverential grief with which all persons looked back upon the dread calamities attached to the year of the *tiger*—all who had either personally shared in those calamities, and had themselves drunk from that cup of sorrow, or who had effectually been made witnesses to their results, and associated with their relief; two great monuments; one embodied in the religious solemnity, enjoined by the Dalai Lama, called in the Tartar language a *Romaniang*—that is, a national commemo-

# REVOLT OF THE TARTARS

ration, with music the most rich and solemn, of all the souls who departed to the rest of Paradise from the afflictions of the Desert: this took place about six years after the arrival in China. Secondly, another more durable and more commensurate to the scale of the calamity and to the grandeur of this national Exodus, in the mighty columns of granite and brass, erected by the Emperor Kien Long, near the banks of the Ily: these columns stand upon the very margin of the *steppes*; and they bear a short but emphatic inscription to the following effect:—

By the Will of God,  
Here, upon the Brink of these Deserts,  
Which from this Point begin and stretch away  
Pathless, treeless, waterless,  
For thousands of miles—and along the margins of  
many mighty Nations,  
Rested from their labours and from great afflictions  
Under the shadow of the Chinese Wall,  
And by the favour of KIEN LONG, God's Lieutenant  
upon Earth,  
The ancient Children of the Wilderness—the Tor-  
gote Tartars—

Flying before the wrath of the Grecian Czar,  
Wandering Sheep who had strayed away from the  
Celestial Empire in the year 1616,  
But are now mercifully gathered again, after infinite  
sorrow,

Into the fold of their forgiving Shepherd.

Hallowed be the spot for ever,  
and

Hallowed be the day—September 8, 1771!  
Amen.

# Rhetoric

No art cultivated by man has suffered more in the revolutions of taste and opinion than the art of rhetoric. There was a time when, by an undue extension of this term, it designated the whole cycle of accomplishments which prepared a man for public affairs. From that height it has descended to a level with the arts of alchemy and astrology, as holding out promises which consist in a mixed degree of impostures wherever its pretensions happened to be weighty, and of trifles wherever they happened to be true. If we look into the prevailing theory of rhetoric, under which it meets with so degrading an estimate, we shall find that it fluctuates between two different conceptions, according to one of which it is an art of ostentatious ornament, and according to the other an art of sophistry. A man is held to play the rhetorician, when he treats a subject with more than usual gaiety of ornament; and perhaps we may add, as an essential element in the idea, with *conscious* ornament. This is one view of rhetoric; and under this what it accomplishes is not so much to persuade as to delight; not so much to win the assent, as to stimulate the attention and captivate the taste. And even this purpose is at-

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tached to something separable and accidental in the matter.

But the other idea of rhetoric lays its foundation in something essential to the matter. This is that rhetoric of which Milton speaks as able "to dash wretched counsels, and to make the worse appear the better reason". Now it is clear that arguments of some quality or other must be taken as the principle of this rhetoric; for those must be immature counsels indeed that could be dashed by mere embellishments of manner, or by artifices of dialect etc. arrangement.

Here then we have in popular use two separate ideas of rhetoric, one of which is connected with the general end of the fine arts; that is to say, intellectual pleasure. The other applies itself more specifically to a definite purpose of utility, viz., persuasion.

Such is the popular idea of rhetoric, which wants both unity and precision. If we seek these from the formal teachers of rhetoric, our disappointment is not much relieved. All of them agree that rhetoric may be defined the art of persuasion. But if we inquire what is persuasion, we find them vague and indefinite or even contradictory. To waive a thousand of others, Dr. Whately, in the work before us, insists upon the conviction of the understanding, as "an essential part of persuasion"; and, on the other hand, the author of the Philosophy of Rhetoric is equally satisfied that there is no persuasion without an appeal to the passion. Here are two views. We, for our parts, have



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meaning of the word *possible*. A new *possibility*, in the Latin use of the word *probabile*, is that ground of assent—which the understanding can solemnly approve and abide by—but the very opposite to this; one which it can submit to for a moment, and countenance as within the limits of the *plausible*. That this was the real governing law of Aristotle's procedure it was not possible to doubt; but was it consciously known to himself? If so, how was it to be reconciled with his own formal account of the office of rhetoric, so often repeated, that it consisted in finding *entymoma*? What then was an *entymoma*?

Oxford: then will think us mad to ask. Certainly we know, what all the world knows, that an *entymoma* was understood to be a syllogism of which one proposition is suppressed—major, minor, or conclusion. But what possible relation had that to rhetoric? Nature sufficiently prompts all men to that sort of ellipsis; and what impertinence in a teacher to build His whole system upon a science precept to do this or that, when the pack would not have forced any man to do otherwise! Besides, Aristotle had represented it as the fruit of former systems, that they applied themselves exclusively to the treatment of the passions—an object foreign to the purpose of the rhetorician, who, in some situations, is absolutely forbidden by law to use any such arts: whereas, says he, his true and universal weapon is the *entymoma*, which is open to him everywhere. Now what opposition, or what rela-



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will groan: "Dutch Burgomaster" will snort; and English Chancery-clerks (who has the honour to be an ancestor of Mr. Wordsworth), though buried for two centuries, will resent the glimpses of the moon. And, really, if the question were for a name, Heaven forbid that we should disturb the peace of logicians: they might have leave to say, as of the Staff in Wharfdale,

"It has borne that name a thousand years,  
And shall a thousand more".

But, whilst the name is *admitted*, the film perishes. Factiolet undoubtedly is right: nor is he the first who has observed the error. Julius Pacius, who understood Aristotle better than any man that ever lived, had long before remarked it. The arguments of Factiolet we will give below; it may be sufficient here to state the result. An *enthymeme* differs from a syllogism, not in the accident of supposing one of its propositions: either may do this, or neither; the difference is essential, and in the nature of the matter; that of the syllogism proper being certain and apodictic; that of the *enthymeme*, simply probable, and drawn from the province of opinion.

This theory tallies exactly with our own previous construction of Aristotle's rhetoric, and explains the stress which he had laid at the crisis upon *enthymemes*. Whatever is certain, or matter of fixed science, can be no subject for the rhetorician: where it is possible

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for the understanding to be convinced, no field is open for rhetorical persuasion. Absolute certainty and fixed science transcend opinion, and exclude the probable. The province of rhetoric, whether meant for an influence upon the actions, or simply upon the beliefs, lies amongst that vast field of cases where there is a *pro* and a *con*, with the chance of right and wrong, true and false, distributed in varying proportions between them. There is also an immense range of truths, where there are no chances at all concerned, but the affirmative and the negative are both true; as, for example, the goodness of human nature and its wickedness; the happiness of human life and its misery; the charms of knowledge, and its holowness; the fragility of human prosperity, in the eye of religious meditation, and its security, as estimated by worldly confidence and youthful hope. In all such cases the rhetorician exhibits his art by giving an impulse to one side, and by withdrawing the mind so steadily from all thoughts or images which support the other, as to leave it practically under the possession of a one-sided estimate.

Upon this theory, what relation to rhetoric shall we assign to style, and the ornamental arts of composition? In some respect they seem liable to the same objection as that which Aristotle has urged against appeals to the passions; both are extra-essential, or *έξω τού παρημμάτος*; they are subjective arts, not objective; that is, they do not affect the thing which is to be surveyed, but the eye of him who is to

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and peculiar styles of countenance, which are impressive in a drawing-room, become ineffective on a public stage. The fine tooling and delicate tracery of the cabinet artist is lost upon a building of colossal proportions. Extraneousness, again, a favourable circumstance to impassioned eloquence, is death to Rhetoric. Two characteristics indeed there were, of a Greek popular assembly, which must have operated fatally on the rhetorician—its fervour, in the first place; and, secondly, the coarseness of a real interest. All great rhetoricians in selecting their subject have shunned the determinate cases of real life: and even in the single instance of a deviation from the rule—that of the author (whoever he be) of the *Declamations* attributed to Quintilian—the cases are shaped with so romantic a generality, and so slightly circumstantiated, as to allow him all the benefit of pure abstractions.

We can readily understand, therefore, why the fervid oratory of the Athenian assemblies, and the intense reality of its interest, should stifle the growth of rhetoric: the smoke, tarnish, and demoniac glare of Vesuvius easily eclipse the pallid coruscations of the aurora borealis. And in fact, amongst the greater orators of Greece, there is not a solitary gleam of rhetoric: Isocrates may have a little, being (to say the truth) neither orator nor rhetorician in any eminent sense; Demosthenes has none. But when those great thunders had subsided which reached “to Macedon and Artaxerxes’ throne”, when the “fierce democracy” itself had perished,



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In the literature of modern Europe, rhetoric has been cultivated with success. But this remark applies only with any force to a period which is now long past; and it is probable, upon various considerations, that such another period will never revolve. The rhetorician's art in its glory and power has silently faded away before the stern tendencies of the age; and if, by any peculiarity of taste or strong determination of the intellect, a rhetorician, *en grand costume*, were again to appear amongst us, it is certain that he would have no better welcome than a stare of surprise as a posture-maker or balancer, not more elevated in the general estimate, but far less amusing, than the acrobat, or funambulist, or equestrian gymnast. No; the age of rhetoric, like that of chivalry, has passed amongst forgotten things; and the rhetorician can have no more chance for returning, than the rhapsodist of early Greece or the troubadour of romance. So multiplied are the modes of intellectual enjoyment in modern times, that the choice is absolutely distracted; and in a boundless theatre of pleasures, to be had at little or no cost of intellectual activity, it would be marvellous indeed if any considerable audience could be found for an exhibition which presupposes a state of tense exertion on the part both of auditor and performer. To hang upon one's own thoughts as an object of conscious interest, to play with them, to watch and pursue them through a maze of inversions, evolutions, and harlequin changes, implies a condi-

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tion of society either like that in the monastic ages, forced to introvert its energies from mere defect of books (whence arose the scholastic metaphysics, admirable for its subtlety, but famishing the mind, whilst it sharpened its edge in one exclusive direction); or, if it implies no absolute starvation of intellect, as in the case of the Roman rhetoric, which arose upon a considerable (though not very various) literature, it proclaims at least a quiescent state of the public mind, unoccupied with daily novelties, and at leisure from the agitations of eternal change.

Growing out of the same condition of society, there is another cause at work which will for ever prevent the resurrection of rhetoric, viz., the necessities of public business, its vast extent, complexity, fulness of details, and consequent vulgarity, as compared with that of the ancients. The very same cause, by the way, furnishes an answer to the question moved by Hume, in one of his essays, with regard to the declension of eloquence in our deliberative assemblies. Eloquence, or at least that which is senatorial and forensic, has languished under the same changes of society which have proved fatal to rhetoric. The political economy of the ancient republics, and their commerce, were simple and unelaborate; the system of their public services, both martial and civil, was arranged on the most naked and manageable principles; for we must not confound the perplexity in our modern explanations of these things, with a perplexity in the things them-

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selves. The foundation of these differences was in the differences of domestic life. Personal wants being few, both from climate and from habit, and, in the great majority of the citizens, limited almost to the pure necessities of nature; hence arose, for the mass of the population, the possibility of surrendering themselves, much more than with us, either to the one paramount business of the state, war, or to a state of Indian idleness. Rome, in particular, during the ages of her growing luxury, must be regarded as a nation supported by other nations; by largesses, in effect; that is to say, by the plunder of conquest. Living, therefore, upon foreign alms, or upon corn purchased by the product of tribute or of spoils, a nation could readily dispense with that expansive development of her internal resources, upon which modern Europe has been forced by the more equal distribution of power amongst the civilized world.

The changes, which have followed in the functions of our popular assemblies, correspond to the great revolution here described. Suppose yourself an ancient Athenian, at some customary display of Athenian oratory, what will be the topics? Peace or war, vengeance for public wrongs, or mercy to prostrate submission, national honour and national gratitude, glory and shame, and every aspect of open appeal to the primal sensibilities of man. On the other hand, enter an English Parliament, having the most of a popular character in its constitution and practice that is anywhere to be found in

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the Christendom of this day, and the subject of debate will probably be a road-bill, a bill for enabling a coal-gas company to assume certain privileges against a competitor in oil-gas, a bill for disfranchising a corrupt borough, or perhaps some technical point of form in the Exchequer Bills' bill. So much is the face of public business vulgarized by details. The same spirit of differences extends to forensic eloquence. Grecian and Roman pleadings are occupied with questions of elementary justice, large and diffusive, apprehensible even to the un instructed, and connecting themselves at every step with powerful and tempestuous feelings. In British trials, on the contrary, the field is foreclosed against any interest of so elevating a nature, because the rights and wrongs of the case are almost inevitably absorbed to an unlearned eye by the technicalities of the law, or by the intricacy of the facts.

But this is not always the case; doubtless not; subjects for eloquence, and therefore eloquence, will sometimes arise in our senate and our courts of justice. And in one respect our British displays are more advantageously circumstanced than the ancient, being more conspicuously brought forward into effect by their contrast to the ordinary course of business.

“Therefore are feasts so solemn and so rare,  
Since seldom coming, in the long year set,  
Like stones of worth they thinly placed are,  
Or captain jewels in the carcanet.”

But still the objection of Hume remains

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unimpeached as to the fact that eloquence is a rarer growth of modern than of ancient civil polity, even in those countries which have the advantage of free institutions. Now why is this? The letter of this objection is sustained, but substantially it is disarmed, so far as its purpose was to argue any declension on the part of Christian nations, by this explanation of ours, which traces the impoverished condition of civil eloquence to the complexity of public business.

But eloquence in one form or other is immortal, and will never perish so long as there are human hearts moving under the agitations of hope and fear, love and passionate hatred. And, in particular to us of the modern world, as an endless source of indemnification for what we have lost in the simplicity of our social systems, we have received a new dowry of eloquence, and *that* of the highest order, in the sanctities of our religion, a field unknown to antiquity, for the pagan religions did not produce much poetry, and of oratory none at all.

On the other hand, that cause, which, operating upon eloquence, has but extinguished it under a single direction, to rhetoric has been unconditionally fatal. Eloquence is not banished from the public business of this country as useless, but as difficult, and as not spontaneously arising from topics such as generally furnish the staple of debate. But rhetoric, if attempted on a formal scale, would be summarily exploded as pure foppery and trifling

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with time. Falstaff, on the field of battle, presenting his bottle of sack for a pistol, or Polonius with his quibbles, could not appear a more unseasonable *plaisanceur* than a rhetorician alighting from the clouds upon a public assembly in Great Britain met for the despatch of business.

Under these malign aspects of the modern structure of society, a structure to which the whole world will be moulded as it becomes civilized, there can be no room for any revival of rhetoric in public speaking; and from the same and other causes, acting upon the standard of public taste, quite as little room in written composition. In spite, however, of the tendencies to this consummation, which have been long ripening, it is a fact, that, next after Rome, England is the country in which rhetoric prospered most, at a time when science was unborn as a popular interest, and the commercial activities of after-times were yet sleeping in their rudiments. This was in the period from the latter end of the sixteenth to the middle of the seventeenth century; and, though the English rhetoric was less rigorously true to its own ideal than the Roman, and often modulated into a higher key of impassioned eloquence, yet unquestionably in some of its qualities it remains a monument of the very finest rhetorical powers.

Omitting Sir Philip Sidney, and omitting his friend, Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke (in whose prose there are some bursts of pathetic eloquence, as there is of rhetoric in his verse,

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though too often harsh and cloudy), the first very eminent rhetorician in the English literature is Donne. Dr. Johnson inconsiderately classes him in company with Cowley, &c., under the title of *Metaphysical Poets*: metaphysical they were not; *Rhetorical* would have been a more accurate designation. In saying *that*, however, we must remind our readers that we revert to the original use of the word *Rhetoric*, as laying the principal stress upon the management of the thoughts, and only a secondary one upon the ornaments of style. Few writers have shown a more extraordinary compass of powers than Donne; for he combined what no other man has ever done—the last sublimation of dialectical subtlety and address with the most impassioned majesty. Massy diamonds compose the very substance of his poem on the Metempsychosis, thoughts and descriptions which have the fervent and gloomy sublimity of Ezekiel or Æschylus, whilst a diamond dust of rhetorical brilliancies is strewed over the whole of his occasional verses and his prose. No criticism was ever more unhappy than that of Dr. Johnson's, which denounces all this artificial display as so much perversion of taste. There cannot be a falser thought than this; for, upon that principle, a whole class of compositions might be vicious by conforming to its own ideal. The artifice and machinery of rhetoric furnishes in its degree as legitimate a basis for intellectual pleasure as any other; that the pleasure is of an inferior order, can no more attaint the idea or model of the composi-

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tion, than it can impeach the excellence of an epigram that is not a tragedy. Every species of composition is to be tried by its own laws; and if Dr. Johnson had urged explicitly (what was evidently moving in his thoughts), that a metrical structure, by holding forth the promise of poetry, defrauds the mind of its just expectations, he would have said what is notoriously false. Metre is open to any form of composition, provided it will aid the expression of the thoughts; and the only sound objection to it is, that it has *not* done so. Weak criticism, indeed, is that which condemns a copy of verses under the ideal of poetry, when the mere substitution of another name and classification suffices to evade the sentence, and to reinstate the composition in its rights as rhetoric. It may be very true that the age of Donne gave too much encouragement to his particular vein of composition; that, however, argues no depravity of taste, but a taste erring only in being too limited and exclusive.

The next writers of distinction who came forward as rhetoricians were Burton in his *Anatomy of Melancholy*, and Milton in many of his prose works. They labour under opposite defects: Burton is too quaint, fantastic, and disjointed; Milton too slow, solemn, and continuous. In the one we see the flutter of a parachute; in the other the stately and voluminous gyrations of an ascending balloon. Agile movement, and a certain degree of fancifulness, are indispensable to rhetoric. But Burton is not so much fanciful as capricious;

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his motion is not the motion of freedom, but of lawlessness; he does not dance, but caper. Milton, on the other hand, *polonaises* with a grand Castilian air, in paces too sequacious and processional; even in his passages of merriment, and when stung into a quicker motion by personal disdain for an unworthy antagonist, his thoughts and his imagery still appear to move to the music of the organ.

In some measure it is a consequence of these peculiarities, and so far it is the more a duty to allow for them, that the rhetoric of Milton, though wanting in animation, is unusually superb in its colouring; its very monotony is derived from the sublime unity of the presiding impulse; and hence, it sometimes ascends into eloquence of the highest kind, and sometimes even into the raptures of lyric poetry. The main thing, indeed, wanting to Milton, was to have fallen upon happier subjects: for, with the exception of the "*Areopagitica*", there is not one of his prose works upon a theme of universal interest, or perhaps fitted to be the groundwork of a rhetorical display.

But, as it has happened to Milton sometimes to give us poetry for rhetoric, in one instance he has unfortunately given us rhetoric for poetry: this occurs in the *Paradise Lost*, where the debates of the fallen angels are carried on by a degrading process of gladiatorial rhetoric. Nay, even the councils of God, though not debated to and fro, are, however, expounded rhetorically. This is astonishing; for no one was better aware than Milton of the distinction

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between the *discursive* and *intuitive* acts of the mind, as apprehended by the old metaphysicians, and the incompatibility of the former with any but a literary intellect. This indeed was familiar to all the writers of his day: but, as Mr. Gifford has shown, by a most idle note upon a passage in Massinger, that it is a distinction which has now perished (except indeed in Germany), we shall recall it to the reader's attention. An *intuition* is any knowledge whatsoever, sensuous or intellectual, which is apprehended *immediately*: a notion, on the other hand, or product of the discursive faculty, is any knowledge whatsoever which is apprehended *mediately*. All reasoning is carried on discursively; that is, *discurrendo*,—by running about to the right and the left, laying the separate notices together, and thence meditately deriving some third apprehension. Now this process, however grand a characteristic of the human species as distinguished from the brute, is degrading to any supra-human intelligence, divine or angelic, by arguing limitation. God must not proceed by steps and the fragmentary knowledge of accretion; in which case, at starting he has all the intermediate notices as so many bars between himself and the conclusion, and even at the penultimate or antepenultimate act he is still short of the truth. God must *see*; he must *intuit*, so to speak; and all truth must reach him simultaneously, first and last, without succession of time or partition of acts: just as light, before that theory had been refuted by the Satellites of Jupiter, was held not to be

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in other respects their minds were of the most opposite temperament: Sir Thomas Browne, deep, tranquil, and majestic as Milton, silently premeditating and “disclosing his golden couplets”, as under some genial instinct of incubation; Jeremy Taylor, restless, fervid, aspiring, scattering abroad a prodigality of life, not unfolding but creating, with the energy and the “myriad-mindedness” of Shakspere. Where, but in Sir T. B., shall one hope to find music so Miltonic, an intonation of such solemn chords as are struck in the following opening bar of a passage in the *Urn-Burial*—“Now, since these bones have rested quietly in the grave, under the drums and tramplings of three conquests,” &c. What a melodious ascent as of a prelude to some impassioned requiem breathing from the pomps of earth, and from the sanctities of the grave! What a *fluctus decumanus* of rhetoric! Time expounded, not by generations or centuries, but by the vast periods of conquests and dynasties; by cycles of Pharaohs and Ptolemies, Antiochi and Arsacides! And these vast successions of time distinguished and figured by the uproars which revolve at their inaugurations; by the drums and tramplings rolling overhead upon the chambers of forgotten dead—the trepidations of time and mortality vexing, at secular intervals, the everlasting sabbaths of the grave! Show us, O pedant, such another strain from the oratory of Greece or Rome! For it is not an Οὐ μα τούς ἐν Μαραθώνι τεθνηκότας, or any such *braevura*, that will make a fit antiphony to

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this sublime rapture. We will not, however, attempt a descent upon the merits of Sir T. Browne, after the admirable one by Coleridge: and as to Jeremy Taylor, we would as readily undertake to put a belt about the ocean as to characterize him adequately within the space at our command. It will please the reader better that he should characterize himself, however imperfectly, by a few specimens selected from some of his rarest works; a method which will, at the same time, have the collateral advantage of illustrating an important truth in reference to this florid or Corinthian order of rhetoric, which we shall have occasion to notice a little further on :—

“It was observed by a Spanish confessor, that in persons not very religious, the confessions which they made upon their death-beds, were the coldest, the most imperfect, and with less contrition than all which he had observed them to make in many years before. For, so the canes of Egypt, when they newly arise from their bed of mud, and slime of Nilus, start up into an equal and continual length, and uninterrupted but with few knots, and are strong and beauteous, with great distances and intervals; but, when they are grown to their full length, they lessen into the point of a pyramid, and multiply their knots and joints, interrupting the fineness and smoothness of its body. So are the steps and declensions of him that does not grow in grace. At first, when he springs up from his impurity

that it should last till forty-eight hours, if gathered upon the even of the Sabbath; and that it should last many hundreds of years when placed in the sanctuary by the ministry of the high priest. But so it was in the Jews' religion; and manna pleased every palate, and it filled all appetites; and the same measure was a different proportion, it was much, and it was little; as if nature, that it might serve religion, had been taught some measures of infinity, which is everywhere and nowhere, filling all things, and circumscribed with nothing, measured by one omer, and doing the work of two; like the crowns of kings, fitting the brows of Nimrod and the most mighty warrior, and yet not too large for the temples of an infant prince."

"His mercies are more than we can tell, and they are more than we can feel: for all the world, in the abyss of the Divine mercies, is like a man diving into the bottom of the sea, over whose head the waters run insensibly and unperceived, and yet the weight is vast, and the sum of them is immeasurable: and the man is not pressed with the burden, nor confounded with numbers: and no observation is able to recount, no sense sufficient to perceive, no memory large enough to retain, no understanding great enough to apprehend this infinity."

These passages are not cited with so vain a purpose as that of furnishing a sea-line for

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measuring the "soundless deeps" of Jeremy Taylor, but to illustrate that one remarkable characteristic of his style, which we have already noticed, viz., the everlasting strife and fluctuation between his rhetoric and his eloquence, which maintain their alternations with a force and inevitable recurrence, like the systole and diastole, the contraction and expansion, of some living organ. For this characteristic he was indebted in mixed proportions to his own peculiar style of understanding, and the nature of his subject. Where the understanding is not active and teeming, but possessed and filled by a few vast ideas (which was the case of Milton), there the funds of a varied rhetoric are wanting. On the other hand, where the understanding is all alive with the subtlety of distinctions, and nourished (as Jeremy Taylor's was) by casuistical divinity, the variety and opulence of the rhetoric is apt to be oppressive. But this tendency, in the case of Taylor, was happily checked and balanced by the commanding passion, intensity, and solemnity of his exalted theme, which gave a final unity to the tumultuous motions of his intellect. The only very obvious defects of Taylor were in the mechanical part of his art, in the mere *technique*; he writes like one who never revises, nor tries the effect upon his ear of his periods as musical wholes; and in the syntax and connexion of the parts seems to have been habitually careless of slight blemishes.

Jeremy Taylor died in a few years after the

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Restoration. Sir Thomas Browne, though at that time nearly thirty years removed from the first surreptitious edition of his *Religio Medici*, lingered a little longer. But, when both were gone, it may be truly affirmed that the great oracles of rhetoric were finally silenced. South and Barrow, indeed, were brilliant dialecticians in different styles; but after Tillotson with his meagre intellect, his low key of feeling, and the smug and scanty draperies of his style, had announced a new era, English divinity ceased to be the racy vineyard that it had been in ages of ferment and struggle. Like the soil of Sicily (*vide* Sir H. Davy's *Agricultural Chemistry*), it was exhausted for ever by the tilth and rank fertility of its golden youth.

Since then great passions and high thinking have either disappeared from literature altogether, or thrown themselves into poetic forms which, with the privilege of a masquerade, are allowed to assume the spirit of past ages, and to speak in a key unknown to the general literature. At all events, no pulpit oratory of a rhetorical cast, for upwards of a century, has been able to support itself when stripped of the aids of voice and action. Robert Hall and Edward Irving when printed exhibit only the spasms of weakness. Nor do we remember one memorable burst of rhetoric in the pulpit eloquence of the last one hundred and fifty years, with the exception of a fine oath ejaculated by a dissenting minister of Cambridge, who, when appealing for the confirmation of his words to the grandeur of man's nature,

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swore,—By this and by the other, and at length, “ By the Iliad, by the Odyssey”—as the climax, in a long bead-roll of *speciosa miracula*, which he had apostrophized as monuments of human power. As to Foster, he has been prevented from preaching by a complaint affecting the throat; but, judging from the quality of his celebrated Essays, he could never have figured as a truly splendid rhetorician; for the imagery and ornamental parts of his Essays have evidently not grown up in the loom, and concurrently with the texture of the thoughts, but have been separately added afterwards, as so much embroidery or fringe.

Politics, meantime, however inferior in any shape to religion, as an ally of real eloquence, might yet, either when barbed by an interest of intense personality, or on the very opposite footing of an interest *not* personal but comprehensively national, have irritated the growth of rhetoric such as the spirit of the times allowed. In one conspicuous instance it did so; but generally it had little effect, as a cursory glance over the two last centuries will show.

In the reign of James I the House of Commons first became the theatre of struggles truly national. The relations of the people and the crown were then brought to issue, and under shifting names, continued *sub judice* from that time to 1688; and from that time, in fact, a corresponding interest was directed to the proceedings of Parliament. But it was not until 1642 that any free communication



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deep impression which they seem to have left upon Lord Chesterfield, himself so accomplished a judge, and so familiar with the highest efforts of the next age in Pulteney and Lord Chatham. With two exceptions, indeed, to be noticed presently, Lord Bolingbroke came the nearest of all parliamentary orators who have been particularly recorded, to the ideal of a fine rhetorician. It was no disadvantage to him that he was shallow, being so luminous and transparent; and the splendour of his periodic diction, with his fine delivery, compensated his defect in imagery. Sir Robert Walpole was another Lord Londonderry; like him, an excellent statesman, and a first-rate leader of the House of Commons, but in other respects a plain unpretending man; and like Lord Londonderry he had the reputation of a blockhead with all eminent blockheads, and of a man of talents with those who were themselves truly such. "When I was very young," says Burke, "a general fashion told me I was to admire some of the writings against that minister; a little more maturity taught me as much to despise them." Lord Mansfield, "the fluent Murray", was, or would have been, but for the counteraction of law, another Bolingbroke. "How sweet an Ovid was in Murray lost!" says Pope; and, if the comparison were suggested with any thoughtful propriety, it ascribes to Lord Mansfield the talents of a first-rate rhetorician. Lord Chatham had no rhetoric at all, any more than Charles Fox of the next generation: both were too fervent, too Demos-

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thenje, and threw themselves too ardently upon the graces of nature. Mr. Pitt came nearer to the idea of a rhetorician, in so far as he seemed to have more artifice; but this was only in the sonorous rotundity of his periods, which were cast in a monotonous mould, for in other respects he would have been keenly alive to the ridicule of rhetoric in a First Lord of the Treasury.

All these persons, whatever might be their other differences, agreed in this, that they were no jugglers, but really *were* that which they appeared to be, and never struggled for distinctions which did not naturally belong to them. But next upon the roll comes forward an absolute *charlatan*; a *charlatan* the most accomplished that can ever have figured upon so intellectual a stage. This was Sheridan, a mocking-bird through the entire scale, from the highest to the lowest note of the gamut; in fact, to borrow a coarse word, the mere personation of humbug. Even as a wit, this was <sup>occas</sup> known to be a wholesale verel, which was man<sup>osures</sup> of his kind bio-House of Commons. bit him in that line of that era had no disting<sup>u</sup> the Tory side, St. John <sup>ad</sup> sterile of per- was the most accomplished<sup>1</sup> whole evening House. His style may be miserable stra- from his writings, which have <sup>for</sup> exploding having been dictated without pri<sup>sacrificing</sup> and the effect of so much showy<sup>ever before</sup> declamation, combined with the g<sup>rlife</sup>. But manner and person, may be inferred<sup>rator</sup> that have put



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the slow deliberations of reason; it flowed spontaneously from the fountain of our feelings; it was involuntary in our natures; it was a quality of our being, innate and coeval with life, which, though afterwards cherished as a passion, was independent of our mental powers; it was earlier than all intelligence in our souls; it displayed itself in the earliest impulses of the heart, and was an emotion of fondness that returned in smiles of gratitude the affectionate solicitudes, the tender anxieties, the endearing attentions experienced before memory began, but which were not less dear for not being remembered. It was the sacrament of nature in our hearts, by which the union of the parent and child was sealed and rendered perfect in the community of love; and which, strengthening and ripening with life, acquired vigour from the understanding, and was most lively and active when most wanted." Now, we put it to any candid reader whether the above Birmingham ware might not be vastly improved by one slight alteration, viz., omitting the two first words, and reading it as a conundrum. Considered as rhetoric, it is evidently fitted "to make a horse sick"; but, as a conundrum in the *Lady's Magazine*, we contend that it would have great success.

How it aggravates the disgust with which these paste-diamonds are now viewed, to remember that they were paraded in the presence of Edmund Burke; nay—*credite posteri!*—in jealous rivalry of his genuine and priceless jewels. Irresistibly, one is reminded of the

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dancing efforts of Lady Blarney and Miss Carolina Wilhelmina Skeggs, against the native grace of the Vicar of Wakefield's family:—“The ladies of the town strove hard to be equally easy, but without success. *They swam, sprawled, languished, and frisked;* but all would not do. The gazers, indeed, owned that it was fine; but neighbour Flamborough observed, that Miss Livy's feet seemed as pat to the music as its echo.” Of Goldsmith it was said, in his epitaph,—*Nil tetigit quod non ornavit:* of the Drury Lane rhetorician it might be said with equal truth,—*Nil tetigit quod non feco adulteravit.* But avaunt, Birmingham! let us speak of a great man.

All hail to Edmund Burke, the supreme writer of his century, the man of the largest and finest understanding! Upon that word, *understanding*, we lay a stress: for oh! ye immortal donkeys, who have written “about him and about him”, with what an obstinate stupidity have ye brayed away for one third of a century about that which ye are pleased to call his “fancy”. Fancy in your throats, ye miserable twaddlers! as if Edmund Burke were the man to play with his fancy, for the purpose of separable ornament. He was a man of fancy in no other sense than as Lord Bacon was so, and Jeremy Taylor, and as all large and discursive thinkers are and must be: that is to say, the fancy which he had in common with all mankind, and very probably in no eminent degree, in him was urged into unusual activity under the necessities of his capacious

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The learned professors of the *rights of man*, however, regard prescription not as a title to bar all other claim, but as a bar against the possessor and proprietor. They hold an immemorial possession to be no more than an aggravated injustice." Then follows the passage in question :—

" Such are *their* ideas; such *their* religion; and such *their* law. But as to *our* country and *our* race, as long as the well-compacted structure of our Church and State, the sanctuary, the holy of holies of that ancient law, defended by reverence, defended by power, a fortress at once and a temple (*Templum in modum arcis*), shall stand inviolate on the brow of the British Sion; as long as the British monarchy, not more limited than fenced by the orders of the State, shall, like the proud Keep of Windsor, rising in the majesty of proportion, and girt with the double belt of its kindred and coeval towers, as long as this awful structure shall oversee and guard the subjected land, so long the mounds and dykes of the low fat Bedford level will have nothing to fear from all the pickaxes of all the levellers of France. As long as our sovereign lord the king, and his faithful subjects the lords and commons of this realm, the triple cord which no man can break; the solemn sworn constitutional frank-pledge of this nation; the firm guarantees of each other's being and each other's rights; the joint and several securities, each in its place and order for every kind and every quality of property and of dignity,—as long as these endure so

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long the Duke of Bedford is safe, and we are all safe together; the high from the blights of envy and the spoliation of rapacity; the low from the iron hand of oppression and the insolent spurn of contempt. Amen! and so be it: and so it will be,

*'Dum domus Aeneae Capitoli immobile saxum  
Accolet; impetrumque pater Romanus habebit'.*

This was the sounding passage which Burke alleged as the *chief-d'œuvre* of his rhetoric; and the argument upon which he justified his choice is specious if not convincing. He laid it down as a maxim of composition, that every passage in a rhetorical performance which was brought forward prominently, and relied upon as a key (to use the language of war) in sustaining the main position of the writer, ought to involve a thought, an image, and a sentiment; and such a synthesis he found in the passage which we have quoted. This criticism, over and above the pleasure which it always gives to hear a great man's opinion of himself, is valuable as showing that Burke, because negligent of trivial inaccuracies, was not at all the less anxious about the larger proprieties and decorums [for this passage, confessedly so laboured, has several instances of slovenliness in trifles]; and that in the midst of his apparent hurry he carried out a jealous vigilance upon what he wrote, and the eye of a person practised in artificial effects.

An ally of Burke's upon East Indian politics:

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availed in keeping alive the public interest in Junius, is clear from this fact, that since the detection of Junius as Sir Philip Francis, the Letters have suddenly declined in popularity, and are no longer the saleable article which once they were.

In fact, upon any other principle, the continued triumph of Junius, and his establishment as a classical author, is a standing enigma. One talent, undoubtedly, he had in a rare perfection—the talent of sarcasm. He stung like a scorpion. But, besides that such a talent has a narrow application, an interest of personality cannot be other than fugitive, take what direction it may; and malignity cannot embalm itself in materials that are themselves perishable. Such were the materials of Junius. His vaunted elegance was, in a great measure, the gift of his subject; general terseness, short sentences, and a careful avoiding of all awkward construction—these were his advantages. And from these he would have been dislodged by a higher subject, or one that would have forced him out into a wider compass of thought. Rhetorician he was none, though he has often been treated as such; for, without sentiment, without imagery, without generalization, how should it be possible for rhetoric to subsist? It is an absolute fact, that Junius has not one principle, aphorism, or remark of a general nature in his whole armory; not in a solitary instance did his barren understanding ascend to an abstraction or general idea, but lingered for ever in the dust and rubbish of individuality,

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amongst the tangible realities of things and persons. Hence, the peculiar absurdity of that hypothesis which discovered Junius in the person of Burke. The opposition was here too pointedly ludicrous between Burke, who exalted the merest personal themes into the dignity of philosophic speculations, and Junius, in whose hands the very loftiest dwindled into questions of person and party.

Last of the family of rhetoricians, and in a form of rhetoric as florid as the age could bear, came Mr. Canning. "Sufficit," says a Roman author, "in una civitate esse unum rhetorem." But, if more were in his age unnecessary, in ours they would have been intolerable. Three or four Mr. Cannings would have been found a nuisance; indeed, the very admiration which crowned his great displays, manifested of itself the unsuitableness of his style to the atmosphere of public affairs; for it was of that kind which is offered to a young lady rising from a brilliant performance on the pianoforte. Something, undoubtedly, there was of too juvenile an air, too gaudy a flutter of plumage, in Mr. Canning's more solemn exhibitions; but much indulgence was reasonably extended to a man, who in his class was so complete. He was formed for winning a favourable attention by every species of popular fascination; to the eye he recommended himself almost as much as the Bolingbroke of a century before; his voice, and his management of it, were no less pleasing; and upon him, as upon St. John, the air of a gentleman sat with a

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native grace. Scholarship and literature, as far as they belong to the accomplishments of a gentleman, he too brought forward in the most graceful manner; and, above all, there was an impression of honour, generosity, and candour, stamped upon his manner, agreeable rather to his original character, than to the wrench which it had received from an ambition resting too much on mere personal merits. What a pity that this "gay creature of the elements" had not taken his place contentedly, where nature had assigned it, as one of the ornamental performers of the time! His station was with the lilies of the field, which toil not neither do they spin. He should have thrown himself upon the admiring sympathies of the world as the most dazzling of rhetorical artists, rather than have challenged their angry passions in a vulgar scuffle for power. In that case he would have been alive at this hour; he would have had a perpetuity of that admiration which to him was as the breath of his nostrils; and would not, by forcing the character of rhetorician into an incongruous alliance with that of trading politician, have run the risk of making both ridiculous.

In thus running over the modern history of rhetoric, we have confined ourselves to the literature of England: the rhetoric of the Continent would demand a separate notice, and chiefly on account of the French pulpit orators. For, laying *them* aside, we are not aware of any distinct body of rhetoric—properly so called—in modern literature. Four continental lan-

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guages may be said to have a literature regularly mounted in all departments, viz., the French, Italian, Spanish, and German; but each of these has stood under separate disadvantages for the cultivation of an ornamented rhetoric. In France, whatever rhetoric they have (for Montaigne, though lively, is too gossiping for a rhetorician), arose in the age of Louis XIV; since which time, the very same development of science and public business operated there as in England to stifle the rhetorical impulses, and all those analogous tendencies in arts and in manners which support it. Generally it may be assumed that rhetoric will not survive the age of the ceremonious in manners and the gorgeous in costume. An unconscious sympathy binds together the various forms of the elaborate and the fanciful, under every manifestation. Hence it is that the national convulsions by which modern France has been shaken, produced orators; Mirabeau, Isnard, the Abbé Maury, but no rhetoricians. Florian, Chateaubriand, and others, who have written the most florid prose that the modern taste can bear, are elegant sentimentalists, sometimes maudlin and semi-poetic, sometimes even eloquent, but never rhetorical. There is no eddying about their own thoughts; no motion of fancy self-sustained from its own activities; no flux and reflux of thought, half meditative, half capricious; but strains of feeling, genuine or not, supported at every step from the excitement of independent external objects.

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With respect to the German literature, the case is very peculiar. A chapter upon German rhetoric would be in the same ludicrous predicament as Von Troil's chapter on the snakes of Iceland, which delivers its business in one summary sentence, announcing that snakes in Iceland—there are none. Rhetoric, in fact, or any form of ornamented prose, could not possibly arise in a literature, in which prose itself had no proper existence till within these seventy years. Lessing was the first German who wrote prose with elegance; and even at this day, a decent prose style is the rarest of accomplishments in Germany. We doubt, indeed, whether any German has written prose with grace, unless he had lived abroad (like Jacobi, who composed indifferently in French and German), or had at least cultivated a very long acquaintance with English and French models. Frederick Schlegel was led by his comprehensive knowledge of other literatures to observe this singular defect in that of his own country. Even he, however, must have fixed his standard very low, when he could praise, as elsewhere he does, the style of Kant. Certainly in any literature where good models of prose existed, Kant would be deemed a monster of vicious diction, so far as regards the construction of his sentences. He does not, it is true, write in the hybrid dialect, which prevailed up to the time of our George the First, when every other word was Latin with a German inflexion; but he has in perfection that obtuseness which renders a German taste insensible to all beauty.

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in the balancing and structure of periods, and to the art by which a succession of periods modify each other. Every German regards a sentence in the light of a package, and a package not for the mail-coach but for the waggon, into which his privilege is to crowd as much as he possibly can. Having framed a sentence, therefore, he next proceeds to *pack* it, which is effected partly by unwieldy tails and codicils, but chiefly by enormous parenthetic involutions. All qualifications, limitations, exceptions, illustrations, are stuffed and violently rammed into the bowels of the principal proposition. That all this equipage of accessories is not so arranged as to assist its own orderly development, no more occurs to a German as any fault, than that in a package of shawls or of carpets the colours and patterns are not fully displayed. To him it is sufficient that they are *there*. And Mr. Kant, when he has succeeded in packing up a sentence which covers three close-printed octavo pages, stops to draw his breath with the air of one who looks back upon some brilliant and meritorious performance. Under these disadvantages it may be presumed that German rhetoric is a nonentity; but these disadvantages would not have arisen had there been a German bar or a German senate with any public existence. In the absence of all forensic and senatorial eloquence, no standard of good prose style—nay, which is more important, no example of ambition directed to such an object—has been at any time held up to the public mind in Germany; and the pulpit style has

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been always either rustically negligent, or bristling with pedantry.

These disadvantages with regard to public models of civil eloquence have in part affected the Italians; the few good prose writers of Italy have been historians; and it is observable that no writers exist in the department of what are called *Moral Essayists*, a class which, with us and the French, were the last depositaries of the rhetorical faculty when depressed to its lowest key. Two other circumstances may be noticed as unfavourable to an Italian rhetoric: one, to which we have adverted before, in the language itself, which is too loitering for the agile motion and the *τὸ αγχιστροφόν* of rhetoric; and the other in the constitution of the national mind, which is not reflective nor remarkably fanciful, the two qualities most indispensable to rhetoric. As a proof of the little turn for reflection which there is in the Italian mind, we may remind the reader that they have no meditative or philosophic poetry, such as that of our Young, Cowper, Wordsworth, &c.; a class of poetry which existed very early indeed in the English literature (e.g., Sir J. Davies, Lord Brooke, Henry More, &c.), and which in some shape has arisen at some stage of almost every European literature.

Of the Spanish rhetoric, *à priori*, we should have augured well; but the rhetoric of their pulpit in past times, which is all that we know of it, is vicious and unnatural; whilst, on the other hand, for eloquence profound and heartfelt, measuring it by those heart-stirring pro-

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clamations issued in all quarters of Spain during 1808-9, the national capacity must be presumed to be of the very highest order.

We are thus thrown back upon the French pulpit orators as the only considerable body of modern rhetoricians out of our own language. No writers are more uniformly praised; none are more entirely neglected. This is one of those numerous hypocrisies so common in matters of taste, where the critic is always ready with his good word as the readiest way of getting rid of the subject. To blame might be hazardous; for blame demands reasons; but praise enjoys a ready dispensation from all reasons and from all discrimination. Superstition, however, as it is under which the French rhetoricians hold their reputation, we have no thought of attempting any disturbance to it in so slight and incidental a notice as this. Let critics by all means continue to invest them with every kind of imaginary splendour. Meantime let us suggest, as a judicious caution, that French rhetoric should be praised with a reference only to its own narrow standard; for it would be a most unfortunate trial of its pretensions to bring so meagre a style of composition into a close comparison with the gorgeous opulence of the English rhetoric of the same century. Under such a comparison two capital points of weakness would force themselves upon the least observant of critics; first, the defect of striking imagery; and secondly, the slenderness of the thoughts. The rhetorical manner is supported in the French writers



In a single mechanical quality of good writing, that is in the structure of their sentences, the French rhetoricians, in common with French writers generally of that age, are superior to ours. This is what in common parlance is expressed (though inaccurately) by the word *style*, and is the subject of the third part of the work before us. Dr. Whately, however, somewhat disappoints us by his mode of treating it. He alleges, indeed, with some plausibility, that his subject bound him to consider style no further than as it was related to the purpose of persuasion. But besides that it is impossible to treat it with effect in that mutilated section,

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that there is not one celebrated author of this day who has written two pages consecutively, without some flagrant impropriety in the grammar (such as the eternal confusion of the preterite with the past participle, confusion of verbs transitive with intransitive, &c.), or some violation more or less of the vernacular idiom. If this last sort of blemish does not occur so frequently in modern books, the reason is that since Dr. Johnson's time the freshness of the idiomatic style has been too frequently abandoned for the lifeless mechanism of a style purely bookish and artificial.

The practical judgments of Dr. Whately are such as will seldom be disputed. Dr. Johnson for his triads and his antithetic balances, he taxes more than once with a plethoric and tautologic tympany of sentence; and in the following passage with a very happy illustration: "Sentences which might have been expressed as simple ones are expanded into complex ones by the addition of clauses which add little or nothing to the sense; and which have been compared to the false handles and key-holes with which furniture is decorated, that serve no other purpose than to correspond to the real ones. Much of Dr. Johnson's writing is chargeable with this fault."

We recollect a little biographic sketch of Dr. Johnson, published immediately after his death, in which, amongst other instances of desperate tautology, the author quotes the well-known lines from the Doctor's imitation of

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"Let observation, with extensive view,  
Survey mankind from China to Peru";

and contends with some reason that this is saying in effect,—“*Let observation with extensive observation observe mankind extensively*”. Certainly Dr. Johnson was the most faulty writer in this kind of inanity that ever has played tricks with language. On the other hand, Burke was the least so; and we are petrified to find him described by Dr. Whately as a writer “qui variare cupit rem prodigaliter unam”, and as on that account offensive to good taste. The understanding of Burke was even morbidly impatient of tautology; progress and motion, everlasting motion, was a mere necessity of his intellect. We will venture to offer a king’s ransom for one unequivocal case of tautology from the whole circle of Burke’s writings. The *principium indiscernibilium*, upon which Leibnitz affirmed the impossibility of finding any two leaves of a tree that should be mere duplicates of each other, in what we might call the *palmistry* of their natural markings, may be applied to Burke as safely as to nature; no two propositions, we are satisfied, can be found in him, which do not contain a larger variety than is requisite to their sharp discrimination.

Speaking of the advantages for energy and effect in the license of arrangement open to the ancient languages, especially to the Latin, Dr. Whately cites the following sentence from the opening of the 4th Book of Q. Curtius:—*Darius tanti modo exercitus rex, qui, triumphantis magis*

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returned thanks to Caesar on behalf of Marcus Mer-cellus", what sort of a speech is reasonably to be expected? The whole purpose being a festal and ceremonial one, thanksgiving its sole burden first and last, what else than the most "elaborate stateliness"? If it were not stately, and to the very verge of the pompous, Mr. Wolf would have had one argument more than he had, and a better than any he has produced, for suspecting the authenticity of that thrice famous oration.

In the course of his dissertation on style, Dr. Whately very needlessly enters upon the thorny question of the *factual*, or characteristic difference, of Poetry as distinguished from prose. We could much have wished that he had forbore to meddle with a *quæstio vexata* of this nature, both because in so incidental and cursory a discussion, and because much of what is apparently not familiar with Dr. Whately has been written on that subject. On a matter so slightly discussed, we shall not trouble ourselves to enter farther, than to express our astonishment that a logician like Dr. Whately should have allowed himself to deliver so nugatory an argument as this which follows:—"Any composition in *verse* (and none that is not), is always called, whether good or bad, a poem, by all who have no favourite hypothesis to maintain". And the inference manifestly is, that it is rightly so called. Now, if a man has taken up any fixed opinion on the subject, no matter whether wrong or right, and has reasons

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to give for his opinion, this man comes under the description of those who have a favourite hypothesis to maintain. It follows, therefore, that the only class of people whom Dr. Whately will allow as unbiassed judges on this question—a question not of fact, but of opinion—are those who have, and who profess to have, no opinion at all upon the subject; or, having one, have no reasons for it. But, apart from this contradiction, how is it possible that Dr. Whately should, in *any* case, plead a popular usage of speech as of any weight in a philosophic argument? Still more, how is it possible in *this* case, where the accuracy of the popular usage is the very thing in debate, so that, if pleaded at all, it must be pleaded as its own justification? Alms-giving, and nothing but alms-giving, is universally called *charity*, and mistaken for the charity of the Scriptures, by all who have no favourite hypothesis to maintain; *i.e.*, by all the inconsiderate. But Dr. Whately will hardly draw any argument from this usage in defence of that popular notion.

In speaking thus freely of particular passages in Dr. Whately's book, we are so far from meaning any disrespect to him, that, on the contrary, if we had not been impressed with the very highest respect for his talents, by the acuteness and originality which illuminate every part of his book, we could not have allowed ourselves to spend as much time upon the whole, as we have in fact spent upon single paragraphs. In reality, there is not a section of his work which has not furnished us with

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occasion for some profitable speculations; and we are, in consequence, most anxious to see his *Logic*, which treats a subject so much more important than *Rhetoric*, and so obstinately misrepresented, that it would delight us much to anticipate a radical exposure of the errors on this subject, taken up from the days of Lord Bacon. It has not fallen in our way to quote much from Dr. Whately *sotidem verbis*; our apology for which will be found in the broken and discontinuous method of treatment by short sections and paragraphs, which a subject of this nature has necessarily imposed upon him. Had it coincided with our purpose to go more into detail, we could have delighted our readers with some brilliant examples of philosophical penetration, applied to questions, interesting from their importance or difficulty, with the happiest effect. As it is, we shall content ourselves with saying, that in any elementary work it has not been our fortune to witness a rarer combination of analytical acuteness with severity of judgment; and when we add that these qualities are recommended by a scholar-like elegance of manner, we suppose it hardly necessary to add, that Dr. Whately's is incomparably the best book of its class, since Campbell's *Philosophy of Rhetoric*.

# The English Mail-Coach

## SECTION THE FIRST THE GLORY OF MOTION

Some twenty or more years before I matriculated at Oxford, Mr. Palmer, at that time M.P. for Bath, <sup>had</sup> accomplished two things, very hard to do on our little planet, the Earth, however cheap they may be held by eccentric people in <sup>the</sup> ~~self~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~in~~ — he had invented mail-coaches, ar the infatuated daughter of a duke. He mpt which <sup>re</sup>, just twice as great <sup>as</sup> an as C<sup>ter</sup>, beckoning, certainly invent (or, <sup>which is th'</sup> *le-à-mayre*, s<sup>discover</sup>) the satellites of Jupiter, <sup>a</sup> "én; <sup>next</sup> things extant to mail-coaches in <sup>the</sup> ~~in~~; two capital pretensions of speed and keep<sup>ing</sup> time, but, on the other hand, who did *not* marry the daughter of a duke.

These mail-coaches, as organized by Mr. Palmer, are entitled to a circumstantial notice from myself, having had so large a share in developing the anarchies of my subsequent dreams; an agency which they accomplished, 1st, through velocity, at that time unprecedented—for they first revealed the glory of motion; 2ndly, through grand effects for the eye between lamp-light and the darkness upon

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porcelain men, under the maxim, that objects not appearing, and not existing, are governed by the same logical construction.

Such being, at that time, the usages of mail-coaches, what was to be done by us of young Oxford? We, the most aristocratic of people, who were addicted to the practice of looking down superciliously even upon the insides themselves as often very questionable characters — were we, by voluntarily going outside, to court indignation? If our dress and bearing sheltered us, reasonably, from the suspicion of being "ruffians," the name at that period for "snobs," we really were but constructively, by the first means — If we did not submit to the deep suspicion of all sorts, we entered analogy of course, that of porcelains. And the analogy of course, was evident, where den in the example of the associations with some of the sort of gallery, carrying off instant house. But the first instant disposal. In the course of this inquiry we have any separate time, or other occasion, it cannot happen of course, that we may have time of leisure, to consider the purpose the convenience of such a place. But the convenience of such a place, for those people, is now, the convenience of the mail and coaches, not horses. That is to say, there we could help ourselves, if we could not be compelled, by the condition of the roads, to consider

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condition we pronounced it impossible. The air, the freedom of prospect, the proximity to the horses, the elevation of seat—these were what we required; but, above all, the certain anticipation of purchasing occasional opportunities of driving.

Such was the difficulty which presented itself; and under the coercion of this difficulty, we instituted a searching inquiry into the true quality and valuation of the different apartments about the mail. We conducted this inquiry on metaphysical principles; and it was ascertained satisfactorily, that the roof of the coach, which by some weak men had been called the attics, and by some the garret, was in reality the drawing-room; in which drawing-room the box was the chief ottoman or sofa; whilst it appeared that the *inside*, which had been traditionally regarded as the only room tenantable by gentlemen, was, in fact, the coal-cellaret in disguise.

Great wits jump. The very same idea had not long before struck the celestial intellect of China. Amongst the presents carried out by our first embassy to that country was a state-coach. It had been specially selected as a personal gift by George III.; but the exact mode of using it was an intense mystery to Pekin. The ambassador, indeed (Lord Macartney), had made some imperfect explanations upon this point; but, as his excellency communicated these in a diplomatic whisper, at the very moment of his departure, the celestial intellect was very feebly illuminated, and it

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For we bribed also. And as our bribes to those of the public were as five shillings to six-pence, here again young Oxford had the advantage. But the contest was ruinous to the principles of the stables connected with the mails. This whole corporation was constantly bribed, rebribed, and often sur-rebribed; a mail-coach yard was like the hustings in a contested election; and a horse-keeper, ostler, or helper, was held by the philosophical art that time to be the most corrupt character in the nation.

There was an impression upon the public mind, natural enough from the continually augmenting velocity of the mail, but quite erroneous, that an outside seat on this class of carriages was a post of danger. On the contrary, I maintained that, if a man had become nervous from some gipsy prediction in his childhood, 'allocating to a particular moon now approaching' some unknown danger, and he should inquire earnestly, "Whither can I fly for shelter? Is a prison the safest retreat? or a lunatic hospital? or the British Museum?" I should have replied, "Oh, no; I'll tell you what to do. Take lodgings for the next forty days on the box of his majesty's mail. Nobody can touch you there. If it is by bills at ninety days after date that you are made unhappy—if noters and protesters are the sort of wretches whose astrological shadows darken the house of life—then note you what I vehemently protest—viz., that no matter though the sheriff and under-sheriff in every con-

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should be running after you with his *penn*, touch a hair of your head he cannot whilst you keep house, and have your legal domicile on the box of the mail. It is felony to stop the mail; even the sheriff cannot do that. And an *extra* touch of the whip to the leaders (no great matter if it grazes the sheriff) at any time guarantees your safety." In fact, a bedroom in a quiet house seems a safe enough retreat, yet it is liable to its own notorious nuisances—to robbers by night, to rats, to fire. But the mail laughs at these terrors. To robbers, the answer is packed up and ready for delivery in the barrel of the guard's blunder-buss. Rats again!—there are none about mail-coaches, any more than snakes in Von Troil's Iceland; except, indeed, now and then a parliamentary rat, who always hides his shame in what I have shown to be the "coal-cellar". And as to fire, I never knew but one in a mail-coach, which was in the Exeter mail, and caused by an obstinate sailor bound to Devonport. Jack, making light of the law and the lawgiver that had set their faces against his offence, insisted on taking up a forbidden seat in the rear of the roof, from which he could exchange his own yarns with those of the guard. No greater offence was then known to mail-coaches; it was treason, it was *læsa majestas*, it was by tendency arson; and the ashes of Jack's pipe, falling amongst the straw of the hinder boot containing the mail-bags, raised a flame which (aided by the wind of our motion) threatened a revolution in the republic of

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we wielded them. Whether this insolence rested upon law that gave it a sanction, or upon conscious power that haughtily dispensed with that sanction, equally it spoke from a potential station; and the agent, in each particular insolence of the moment, was viewed reverentially, as one having authority.

Sometimes after breakfast his majesty's mail would become frisky; and in its difficult wheelings amongst the intricacies of early markets, it would upset an apple-cart, a cart loaded with eggs, &c. Huge was the affliction and dismay, awful was the smash. I, as far as possible, endeavoured in such a case to represent the conscience and moral sensibilities of the mail; and, when wildernesses of eggs were lying stretch forth under our horses' hoofs, then would I words too celebrated at that time, from the false echoes of Marengo), "Ah! wherfore have we not time to weep over you?" which was evidently impossible, since, in fact, we had not time to laugh over them. Tied to post-office allowance, in some cases of fifty minutes for eleven miles, could the royal mail pretend to undertake the offices of sympathy and condolence? Could it be expected to provide tears for the accidents of the road? If even it seemed to trample on humanity, it did so, I felt, in discharge of its own more peremptory duties.

Upholding the morality of the mail, *& fortiori* I upheld its rights; as a matter of duty, I stretched to the uttermost its privilege of

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perial precedence, and astonished weak minds by the feudal powers which I hinted to be lurking constructively in the charters of this proud establishment. Once I remember being on the box of the Holyhead mail, between Shrewsbury and Oswestry, when a tawdry thing from Birmingham, some "Tallyho" or "Highflyer", all flaunting with green and gold, came up alongside of us. What a contrast to our royal simplicity of form and colour in this plebeian wretch! The single ornament on our dark ground of chocolate colour was the mighty shield of the imperial arms, but emblazoned in proportions as modest as a signet-ring bears to a seal of office. Even this was displayed only on a single pannel, whispering, rather than proclaiming, our relations to the mighty state; whilst the beast from Birmingham, our green-and-gold friend from false, fleeting, perjured Brummagem, had as much writing and painting on its sprawling flanks as would have puzzled a decipherer from the tombs of Luxor. For some time this Birmingham machine ran along by our side—a piece of familiarity that already of itself seemed to me sufficiently jacobinical. But all at once a movement of the horses announced a desperate intention of leaving us behind. "Do you see *that*?" I said to the coachman.—"I see," was his short answer. He was wide awake, yet he waited longer than seemed prudent; for the horses of our audacious opponent had a disagreeable air of freshness and power. But his motive was loyal; his wish was, that

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the Birmingham conceit should be full-blown before he froze it. When *that* seemed right, he unloosed, or, to speak by a stronger word, he *sprang*, his known resources: he slipped our royal horses like cheetahs, or hunting-leopards, after the affrighted game. How they could retain such a reserve of fiery power after the work they had accomplished, seemed hard to explain. But on our side, besides the physical superiority, was a tower of moral strength, namely, the king's name, "which they upon the adverse faction wanted". Passing them without an effort, as it seemed, we threw them into the rear with so lengthening an interval between us, as proved in itself the bitterest mockery of their presumption; whilst our guard blew back a shattering blast of triumph, that was really too painfully full of derision.

I mention this little incident for its connection with what followed. A Welsh rustic, sitting behind me, asked if I had not felt my heart burn within me during the progress of the race? I said, with philosophic calmness, *No*; because we were not racing with a mail, so that no glory could be gained. In fact, it was sufficiently mortifying that such a Birmingham thing should dare to challenge us. The Welshman replied, that he didn't see *that*; for that a cat might look at a king, and a Brummagem coach might lawfully race the Holyhead mail. "*Race* us, if you like," I replied, "though even *that* has an air of sedition, but not *beat* us. This would have been treason; and for its own sake I am glad that the

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‘Tallyho’ was disappointed.” So dissatisfied did the Welshman seem with this opinion, that at last I was obliged to tell him a very fine story from one of our elder dramatists—viz., that once, in some far oriental kingdom, when the sultan of all the land, with his princes, ladies, and chief omrahs, were flying their falcons, a hawk suddenly flew at a majestic eagle; and in defiance of the eagle’s natural advantages, in contempt also of the eagle’s traditional royalty, and before the whole assembled field of astonished spectators from Agra and Lahore, killed the eagle on the spot. Amazement seized the sultan at the unequal contest, and burning admiration for its unparalleled result. He commanded that the hawk should be brought before him; he caressed the bird with enthusiasm; and he ordered that, for the commemoration of his matchless courage, a diadem of gold and rubies should be solemnly placed on the hawk’s head; but then that, immediately after this solemn coronation, the bird should be led off to execution, as the most valiant indeed of traitors, but not the less a traitor, as having dared to rise rebelliously against his liege lord and anointed sovereign, the eagle. “Now,” said I to the Welshman, “to you and me, as men of refined sensibilities, how painful it would have been that this poor Brummagem brute, the ‘Tallyho’, in the impossible case of a victory over us, should have been crowned with Birmingham tinsel, with paste diamonds, and Roman pearls, and then led off to instant execution.”

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The Welshman doubted if that could be warranted by law. And when I hinted at the 6th of Edward Longshanks, chap. 18, for regulating the precedence of coaches, as being probably the statute relied on for the capital punishment of such offences, he replied drily, that if the attempt to pass a mail really were treasonable, it was a pity that the "Tallyho" appeared to have so imperfect an acquaintance with law.

The modern modes of travelling cannot compare with the old mail-coach system in grandeur and power. They boast of more velocity, not, however, as a consciousness, but as a fact of our lifeless knowledge, resting upon *alien* evidence; as, for instance, because somebody says that we have gone fifty miles in the hour, though we are far from feeling it as a personal experience, or upon the evidence of a result, as that actually we find ourselves in York four hours after leaving London. Apart from such an assertion, or such a result, I myself am little aware of the pace. But, seated on the old mail-coach, we needed no evidence out of ourselves to indicate the velocity. On this system the word was, *Non magna loquimur*, as upon railways, but *civimus*. Yes, "*magna civimus*"; we do not make verbal ostentation of our grandeurs, we realize our grandeurs in act, and in the very experience of life. The vital experience of the glad animal sensibilities made doubts impossible on the question of our speed; we heard our speed, we saw it, we felt it as a thrilling; and this speed

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was not the product of blind insensate agencies, that had no sympathy to give, but was incarnated in the fiery eyeballs of the noblest amongst brutes, in his dilated nostril, spasmodic muscles, and thunder-beating hoofs. The sensibility of the horse, uttering itself in the maniac light of his eye, might be the last vibration of such a movement; the glory of Salamanca might be the first. But the intervening links that connected them, that spread the earthquake of battle into the eyeball of the horse, were the heart of man and its electric thrillings—kindling in the rapture of the fiery strife, and then propagating its own tumults by contagious shouts and gestures to the heart of his servant the horse.

But now, on the new system of travelling, iron tubes and boilers have disconnected man's heart from the ministers of his locomotion. Nile nor Trafalgar has power to raise an extra bubble in a steam-kettle. The galvanic cycle is broken up for ever; man's imperial nature no longer sends itself forward through the electric sensibility of the horse; the inter-agencies are gone in the mode of communication between the horse and his master, out of which grew so many aspects of sublimity under accidents of mists that hid, or sudden blazes that revealed, of mobs that agitated, or midnight solitudes that awed. Tidings, fitted to convulse all nations, must henceforwards travel by culinary process; and the trumpet that once announced from afar the laurelled mail, heart-shaking, when heard screaming on the wind,

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and proclaiming itself through the darkness to every village or solitary house on its route, has now given way for ever to the pot-walloppings of the boiler.

Thus have perished multiform openings for public expressions of interest, scenical yet natural, in great national tidings; for revelations of faces and groups that could not offer themselves amongst the fluctuating mobs of a railway station. The gatherings of gazers about a laurelled mail had one centre, and acknowledged one sole interest. But the crowds attending at a railway station have as little unity as running water, and own as many centres as there are separate carriages in the train.

How else, for example, than as a constant watcher for the dawn, and for the London mail that in summer months entered about daybreak amongst the lawny thickets of Marlborough forest, couldst thou, sweet Fanny of the Bath road, have become the glorified inmate of my dreams? Yet Fanny, as the loveliest young woman for face and person that perhaps in my whole life I have beheld, merited the station which even now, from a distance of forty years, she holds in my dreams; yes, though by links of natural association she brings along with her a troop of dreadful creatures, fabulous and not fabulous, that are more abominable to the heart, than Fanny and the dawn are delightful.

Miss Fanny of the Bath road, strictly speaking, lived at a mile's distance from that road; but came so continually to meet the mail, that

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I on my frequent transits rarely missed her, and naturally connected her image with the great thoroughfare where only I had ever seen her. Why she came so punctually, I do not exactly know; but I believe with some burden of commissions to be executed in Bath, which had gathered to her own residence as a central rendezvous for converging them. The mail-coachman who drove the Bath mail, and wore the royal livery, happened to be Fanny's grandfather. A good man he was, that loved his beautiful granddaughter; and, loving her wisely, was vigilant over her deportment in any case where young Oxford might happen to be concerned. Did my vanity then suggest that I myself, individually, could fall within the line of his terrors? Certainly not, as regarded any physical pretensions that I could plead; for Fanny (as a chance passenger from her own neighbourhood once told me) counted in her train a hundred and ninety-nine professed admirers, if not open aspirants to her favour; and probably not one of the whole brigade but excelled myself in personal advantages. Ulysses even, with the unfair advantage of his accursed bow, could hardly have undertaken that amount of suitors. So the danger might have seemed slight—only that woman is universally aristocratic; it is amongst her nobilities of heart that she *is* so. Now, the aristocratic distinctions in my favour might easily with Miss Fanny have compensated my physical deficiencies. Did I then make love to Fanny? Why, yes; about as much love as one *could* make whilst the mail

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was changing horses—a process which, ten years later, did not occupy above eighty seconds; but *then*—viz., about Waterloo—it occupied five times eighty. Now, four hundred seconds offer a field quite ample enough for whispering into a young woman's ear a great deal of truth, and (by way of parenthesis) some trifle of falsehood. Grandpapa did right, therefore, to watch me. And yet, as happens too often to the grandpas of earth, in a contest with the admirers of granddaughters, how vainly would he have watched me had I meditated any evil whispers to Fanny! She, it is my belief, would have protected herself against any man's evil suggestions. But he, as the result showed, could not have intercepted the opportunities for such suggestions. Yet, why not? Was he not active? Was he not blooming? Blooming he was as Fanny herself.

“Say, all our praises why should lords——”

Stop, that's not the line.

“Say, all our roses why should girls engross?”

The coachman showed rosy blossoms on his face deeper even than his granddaughter's—*his* being drawn from the ale-cask, Fanny's from the fountains of the dawn. But, in spite of his blooming face, some infirmities he had; and one particularly in which he too much resembled a crocodile. This lay in a monstrous inaptitude for turning round. The crocodile, I presume, owes that inaptitude to the absurd length of his back; but in our grandpapa it

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more rather from the absurd *height* of his back, combined, possibly, with some growing stiffness in his legs. Now, upon this crocodile infirmity of his I planted a human advantage for tendering my homage to Miss Fanny. In defiance of all his honourable vigilance, no sooner had he presented to us his mighty Jovian back (what a field for displaying to mankind his royal scarlet!), whilst inspecting professionally the buckles, the straps, and the silvery turrets of his harness, than I raised Miss Fanny's hand to my lips, and, by the mixed tenderness and respectfulness of my manner, caused her easily to understand how happy it would make me to rank upon her list as No. 10 or 12, in which case a few casualties amongst her lovers (and observe, they *hanged* liberally in those days) might have promoted me speedily to the top of the tree; as, on the other hand, with how much loyalty of submission I acquiesced by anticipation in her award, supposing that she should plant me in the very rearward of her favour, as No. 199 + 1. Most truly I loved this beautiful and ingenuous girl; and had it not been for the Bath mail, timing all courtships by post-office allowance, heaven only knows what might have come of it. People talk of being over head and ears in love; now, the mail was the cause that I sank only over ears in love, which, you know, still left a trifle of brain to overlook the whole conduct of the affair.

Ah, reader! when I look back upon those days, it seems to me that all things change—

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their fawns retire into the dewy thickets; the  
thickets are rich with roses; once again the  
roses call up the sweet countenance of Fanny;  
and she, being the granddaughter of a croco-  
dile, awakens a dreadful host of semi-legendary  
animals—griffins, dragons, basilisks, sphinxes  
—till at length the whole vision of fighting  
images crowds into one towering armorial  
shield, a vast emblazonry of human charities  
and human loveliness that have perished, but  
quartered heraldically with unutterable and  
demonic natures, whilst over all rises, as a  
surmounting crest, one fair female hand, with  
the forefinger pointing, in sweet, sorrowful  
admonition, upwards to heaven, where is  
sculptured the eternal writing which proclaims  
the frailty of earth and her children.

## GOING DOWN WITH VICTORY

But the grandest chapter of our experience,  
within the whole mail-coach service, was on  
those occasions when we went down from  
London with the news of victory. A period  
of about ten years stretched from Trafalgar  
to Waterloo; the second and third years of  
which period (1806 and 1807) were com-  
paratively sterile; but the other nine (from  
1805 to 1815 inclusively) furnished a long  
succession of victories; the least of which, in  
such a contest of Titans, had an inappreciable  
value of position—partly for its absolute inter-  
ference with the plans of our enemy, but still

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more from its keeping alive through central Europe the sense of a deep-seated vulnerability in France. Even to tease the coasts of our enemy, to mortify them by continual blockades, to insult them by capturing if it were but a baubling schooner under the eyes of their arrogant armies, repeated from time to time a sullen proclamation of power lodged in one quarter to which the hopes of Christendom turned in secret. How much more loudly must this proclamation have spoken in the audacity of having bearded the *élite* of their troops, and having beaten them in pitched battles! Five years of life it was worth paying down for the privilege of an outside place on a mail-coach when carrying down the first tidings of any such event. And it is to be noted that, from our insular situation, and the multitude of our frigates disposable for the rapid transmission of intelligence, rarely did any unauthorized rumour steal away a prelibation from the first aroma of the regular despatches. The government news was generally the earliest news.

From eight P.M. to fifteen or twenty minutes later, imagine the mails assembled on parade in Lombard Street, where, at that time, and not in St. Martin's-le-Grand, was seated the General Post-office. In what exact strength we mustered I do not remember; but, from the length of each separate *attelage*, we filled the street, though a long one, and though we were drawn up in double file. On *any* night the spectacle was beautiful. The absolute



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from garrets alike and cellars, through infinite London, look down or look up with loving eyes upon our gay ribbons and our martial laurels; sometimes kiss their hands; sometimes hang out, as signals of affection, pocket-handkerchiefs, aprons, dusters, anything that, by catching the summer breezes, will express an aerial jubilation. On the London side of Barnet, to which we draw near within a few minutes after nine, observe that private carriage which is approaching us. The weather being so warm, the glasses are all down; and one may read, as on the stage of a theatre, everything that goes on within. It contains three ladies—one likely to be “mamma”, and two of seventeen or eighteen, who are probably her daughters. What lovely animation, what beautiful unpremeditated pantomime, explaining to us every syllable that passes, in these ingenuous girls! By the sudden start and raising of the hands, on first discovering our laurelled equipage!—by the sudden movement and appeal to the elder lady from both of them—and by the heightened colour on their animated countenances, we can almost hear them saying, “See, see! Look at their laurels! Oh, mamma! there has been a great battle in Spain; and it has been a great victory.” In a moment we are on the point of passing them. We passengers—I on the box, and the two on the roof behind me—raise our hats to the ladies; the coachman makes his professional salute with the whip; the guard even, though punctilious on the matter of his dignity as an officer under



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countenance expresses sorrow. At first she does not look up; so that I believe she is not aware of our approach, until she hears the measured beating of our horses' hoofs. Then she raises her eyes to settle them painfully on our triumphal equipage. Our decorations explain the case to her at once; but she beholds them with apparent anxiety, or even with terror. Some time before this, I, finding it difficult to hit a flying mark, when embarrassed by the coachman's person and reins intervening, had given to the guard a *Cavallerie* evening paper, containing the gazette, for the next carriage that might pass. Accordingly he tossed it in so folded that the huge capitals expressing some such legend as—GLORIOUS VICTORY, might catch the eye at once. To see the paper, however, at all, interpreted as it was by our ensigns of triumph, explained everything; and if the guard were right in thinking the lady to have received it with a gesture of horror, it could not be doubtful that she had suffered some deep personal affliction in connection with this Spanish war.

Here, now, was the case of one who, having formerly suffered, might, erroneously perhaps, be distressing herself with anticipations of another similar suffering. That same night, and hardly three hours later, occurred the reverse case. A poor woman, who too probably would find herself, in a day or two, to have suffered the heaviest of afflictions by the battle, blindly allowed herself to express an exultation so unmeasured in the news and its

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details, as gave to her the appearance which amongst Celtic Highlanders is called *fey*. This was at some little town where we changed horses an hour or two after midnight. Some fair or wake had kept the people up out of their beds, and had occasioned a partial illumination of the stalls and booths, presenting an unusual but very impressive effect. We saw many lights moving about as we drew near; and perhaps the most striking scene on the whole route was our reception at this place. The flashing of torches and the beautiful radiance of blue lights (technically, Bengal lights) upon the heads of our horses; the fine effect of such a showery and ghostly illumination falling upon our flowers and glittering laurels; whilst all around ourselves, that formed a centre of light, the darkness gathered on the rear and flanks in massy blackness; these optical splendours, together with the prodigious enthusiasm of the people, composed a picture at once scenical and affecting, theatrical and holy. As we staid for three or four minutes, I alighted; and immediately from a dismantled stall in the street, where no doubt she had been presiding through the earlier part of the night, advanced eagerly a middle-aged woman. The sight of my newspaper it was that had drawn her attention upon myself. The victory which we were carrying down to the provinces on *this* occasion, was the imperfect one of Talavera — imperfect for its results, such was the virtual treachery of the Spanish general, Cuesta, but not imperfect in

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its ever-memorable heroism. I told her the main outline of the battle. The agitation of her enthusiasm had been so conspicuous when listening, and when first applying for information, that I could not but ask her if she had not some relative in the Peninsular army. Oh, yes; her only son was there. In what regiment? He was a trooper in the 23rd Dragoons. My heart sank within me as she made that answer. This sublime regiment, which an Englishman should never mention without raising his hat to their memory, had made the most memorable and effective charge recorded in military annals. They leaped their horses —*over* a trench where they could; *into* it, and with the result of death or mutilation, when they could *not*. What proportion cleared the trench is nowhere stated. Those who *did*, closed up and went down upon the enemy with such divinity of fervour (I use the word *divinity* by design: the inspiration of God must have prompted this movement to those whom even then He was calling to His presence), that two results followed. As regarded the enemy, this 23rd Dragoons, not, I believe, originally three hundred and fifty strong, paralyzed a French column, six thousand strong, then ascended the hill, and fixed the gaze of the whole French army. As regarded themselves, the 23rd were supposed at first to have been barely not annihilated; but eventually, I believe, about one in four survived. And this, then, was the regiment—a regiment already for some hours glorified and hallowed to the

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car of all London, as lying stretched, by a large majority, upon one bloody aceldama—in which the young trooper served whose mother was now talking in a spirit of such joyous enthusiasm. Did I tell her the truth? Had I the heart to break up her dreams? No. To-morrow, said I to myself—to-morrow, or the next day, will publish the worst. For one night more, wherefore should she not sleep in peace? After to-morrow, the chances are too many that peace will forsake her pillow. This brief respite, then, let her owe to *my* gift and *my* forbearance. But, if I told her not of the bloody price that had been paid, not, therefore, was I silent on the contributions from her son's regiment to that day's service and glory. I showed her not the funeral banners under which the noble regiment was sleeping. I lifted not the overshadowing laurels from the bloody trench in which horse and rider lay mangled together. But I told her how these dear children of England, officers and privates, had leaped their horses over all obstacles as gaily as hunters to the morning's chase. I told her how they rode their horses into the mists of death (saying to myself, but not saying to *her*), and laid down their young lives for thee, O mother England! as willingly—poured out their noble blood as cheerfully—as ever, after a long day's sport, when infants, they had rested their wearied heads upon their mother's knees, or had sunk to sleep in her arms. Strange it is, yet true, that she seemed to have no fears for her son's safety, even after this

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knowledge that the 23rd Dragoons had been memorably engaged; but so much was she enraptured by the knowledge that *his* regiment, and therefore that *he*, had rendered conspicuous service in the dreadful conflict—a service which had actually made them, within the last twelve hours, the foremost topic of conversation in London—so absolutely was fear swallowed up in joy—that, in the mere simplicity of her fervent nature, the poor woman threw her arms round my neck, as she thought of her son, and gave to *me* the kiss which secretly was meant for *him*.

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### SECTION THE SECOND THE VISION OF SUDDEN DEATH

What is to be taken as the predominant opinion of man, reflective and philosophic, upon SUDDEN DEATH? It is remarkable that, in different conditions of society, sudden death has been variously regarded as the consummation of an earthly career most fervently to be desired, or, again, as that consummation which is with most horror to be deprecated. Cæsar the Dictator, at his last dinner party (*cœna*), on the very evening before his assassination, when the minutes of his earthly career were numbered, being asked what death, in *his* judgment, might be pronounced the most eligible, replied, “That which should be most sudden.”

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On the other hand, the divine Litany of our English Church, when breathing forth supplications, as if in some representative character for the whole human race prostrate before God, places such a death in the very van of horrors:—"From lightning and tempest; from plague, pestilence, and famine; from battle and murder, and from SUDDEN DEATH—*Good Lord, deliver us*". Sudden death is here made to crown the climax in a grand ascent of calamities; it is ranked among the last of curses; and yet, by the noblest of Romans, it was ranked as the first of blessings. In that difference, most readers will see little more than the essential difference between Christianity and Paganism. But this, on consideration, I doubt. The Christian Church may be right in its estimate of sudden death; and it is a natural feeling, though after all it may also be an infirm one, to wish for a quiet dismissal from life—as that which *seems* most reconcilable with meditation, with penitential retrospects, and with the humilities of farewell prayer. There does not, however, occur to me any direct scriptural warrant for this earnest petition of the English Litany, unless under a special construction of the word "sudden". It seems a petition—indulged rather and conceded to human infirmity, than exacted from human piety. It is not so much a doctrine built upon the eternities of the Christian system, as a plausible opinion built upon special varieties of physical temperament. Let that, however, be as it may, two remarks suggest themselves as prudent restraints upon

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a doctrine, which else *may* wander, and *has* wandered, into an uncharitable superstition. The first is this: that many people are likely to exaggerate the horror of a sudden death, from the disposition to lay a false stress upon words or acts, simply because by an accident they have become *final* words or acts. If a man dies, for instance, by some sudden death when he happens to be intoxicated, such a death is falsely regarded with peculiar horror as though the intoxication were suddenly exalted into a blasphemy. But *that* is unphilosophic. The man was, or he was not, *habitually* a drunkard. If not, if his intoxication were a solitary accident, there can be no reason for allowing special emphasis to this act, simply because through misfortune it became his final act. Nor, on the other hand, if it were no accident, but one of his *habitual* transgressions, will it be the more habitual or the more a transgression, because some sudden calamity, surprising him, has caused this habitual transgression to be also a final one. Could the man have had any reason even dimly to foresee his own sudden death, there would have been a new feature in his act of intemperance—a feature of presumption and irreverence, as in one that, having known himself drawing near to the presence of God, should have suited his demeanour to an expectation so awful. But this is no part of the case supposed. And the only new element in the man's act is not any element of special immorality, but simply of special misfortune.

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this, to a man of apprehensive conscience, would mingle the misery of an atrocious criminality with the misery of a bloody calamity. You are called upon, by the case supposed, possibly to die; but to die at the very moment when, by any even partial failure, or effeminate collapse of your energies, you will be self-denounced as a murderer. You had but the twinkling of an eye for your effort, and that effort might have been unavailing; but to have risen to the level of such an effort, would have rescued you, though not from dying, yet from dying as a traitor to your final and farewell duty.

The situation here contemplated exposes a dreadful ulcer, lurking far down in the depths of human nature. It is not that men generally are summoned to face such awful trials. But potentially, and in shadowy outline, such a trial is moving subterraneously in perhaps all men's natures. Upon the secret mirror of our dreams such a trial is darkly projected, perhaps, to every one of us. That dream, so familiar to childhood, of meeting a lion, and, through languishing prostration in hope and the energies of hope, that constant sequel of lying down before the lion, publishes the secret frailty of human nature—reveals its deep-seated falsehood to itself—records its abysmal treachery. Perhaps not one of us escapes that dream; perhaps, as by some sorrowful doom of man, that dream repeats for every one of us, through every generation, the original temptation in Eden. Every one of us, in this dream, has

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a bait offered to the infirm places of his own individual will; once again a snare is presented for tempting him into captivity to a luxury of ruin; once again, as in aboriginal Paradise, the man falls by his own choice; again, by infinite iteration, the ancient Earth groans to Heaven, through her secret caves, over the weakness of her child: "Nature, from her seat, sighing through all her works", again "gives signs of woe that all is lost"; and again the counter sigh is repeated to the sorrowing heavens for the endless rebellion against God. It is not without probability that in the world of dreams every one of us ratifies for himself the original transgression. In dreams, perhaps under some secret conflict of the midnight sleeper, lighted up to the consciousness at the time, but darkened to the memory as soon as all is finished, each several child of our mysterious race completes for himself the treason of the aboriginal fall.

The incident, so memorable in itself by its features of horror, and so scenical by its grouping for the eye, which furnished the text for this reverie upon *Sudden Death*, occurred to myself in the dead of night, as a solitary spectator, when seated on the box of the Manchester and Glasgow mail, in the second or third summer after Waterloo. I find it necessary to relate the circumstances, because they are such as could not have occurred unless under a singular combination of accidents. In those days, the oblique and lateral communications

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"Monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens cui  
lumen ademptum".

He answered to the conditions in every one of the items:—1, a monster he was; 2, dreadful; 3, shapeless; 4, huge; 5, who had lost an eye. But why should *that* delight me? Had he been one of the Calendars in the *Arabian Nights* and had paid down his eye as the price of his criminal curiosity, what right had *I* to exult in his misfortune? I did *not* exult: I delighted in no man's punishment, though it were even merited. But these personal distinctions (Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) identified in an instant an old friend of mine, whom I had known in the south for some years as the most masterly of mail-coachmen. He was the man in all Europe that could (if *any* could) have driven six-in-hand full gallop over *Al Sirat*—that dreadful bridge of Mahomet, with no side battlements, and of *extra* room not enough for a razor's edge—leading right across the bottomless gulf. Under this eminent man, whom in Greek I cognominated Cyclops *diphrelates* (Cyclops the charioteer), I, and others known to me, studied the diphrelic art. Excuse, reader, a word too elegant to be pedantic. As a pupil, though I paid extra fees, it is to be lamented that I did not stand high in his esteem. It showed his dogged honesty (though, observe, not his discernment), that he could not see my merits. Let us excuse his absurdity in this particular, by remembering his want of an eye. Doubtless *that* made him

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blind to my merits. In the art of conversation, however, he admitted that I had the whip hand of him. On this present occasion, great joy was at our meeting. But what was Cyclops doing here? Had the medical men recommended northern air, or how? I collected, from such explanations as he volunteered, that he had an interest at stake in some suit-at-law now pending at Lancaster; so that probably he had got himself transferred to this station, for the purpose of connecting with his professional pursuits an instant readiness for the calls of his lawsuit.

Meantime, what are we stopping for? Surely we have now waited long enough. Oh, this procrastinating mail, and this procrastinating post-office. Can't they take a lesson upon that subject from *me*? Some people have called *me* procrastinating. Yet you are witness, reader, that I was here kept waiting for the post-office. Will the post-office lay its hand on its heart, in its moments of sobriety, and assert that ever it waited for *me*? What art they about? The guard tells me that there is a large extra accumulation of foreign mails this night, owing to irregularities caused by war, by wind, by weather, in the packet service, which as yet does not benefit at all by steam. For an *extra* hour, it seems, the post-office has been engaged in threshing out the pure wheaten correspondence of Glasgow, and winnowing it from the chaff of all baser intermediate towns. But at last all is finished. Sound your horn, guard. Manchester, good-

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bye; we've lost an hour by your criminal conduct at the post-office: which, however, though I do not mean to part with a serviceable ground of complaint, and one which really *is* such for the horses, to me secretly is an advantage, since it compels us to look sharply for this lost hour amongst the next eight or nine, and to recover it (if we can) at the rate of one mile extra per hour. Off we are at last, and at eleven miles an hour; and for the moment I detect no changes in the energy or in the skill of Cyclops.

From Manchester to Kendal, which virtually (though not in law) is the capital of Westmoreland, there were at this time seven stages of eleven miles each. The first five of these, counting from Manchester, terminate in Lancaster, which is therefore fifty-five miles north of Manchester, and the same distance exactly from Liverpool. The first three stages terminate in Preston (called, by way of distinction from other towns of that name, *proud* Preston), at which place it is that the separate roads from Liverpool and from Manchester to the north become confluent. Within these first three stages lay the foundation, the progress, and termination of our night's adventure. During the first stage I found out that Cyclops was mortal: he was liable to the shocking affection of sleep—a thing which previously I had never suspected. If a man indulges in the vicious habit of sleeping, all the skill in aurigation of Apollo himself, with the horses of Aurora to execute his notions, avail him nothing. “Oh,

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Cyclops!" I exclaimed, "thou art mortal. My friend, thou snorest." Through the first eleven miles, however, this infirmity—which I grieve to say that he shared with the whole Pagan Pantheon—betrayed itself only by brief snatches. On waking up, he made an apology for himself, which, instead of mending matters, laid open a gloomy vista of coming disasters. The summer assizes, he reminded me, were now going on at Lancaster: in consequence of which, for three nights and three days, he had not lain down in a bed. During the day, he was waiting for his own summons as a witness on the trial in which he was interested; or else, lest he should be missing at the critical moment, was drinking with the other witnesses, under the pastoral surveillance of the attorneys. During the night, or that part of it which at sea would form the middle watch, he was driving. This explanation certainly accounted for his drowsiness, but in a way which made it much more alarming; since now, after several days' resistance to this infirmity, at length he was steadily giving way. Throughout the second stage he grew more and more drowsy. In the second mile of the third stage, he surrendered himself finally, and without a struggle, to his perilous temptation. All his past resistance had but deepened the weight of his final oppression. Seven atmospheres of sleep rested upon him; and to consummate the case, our worthy guard, after singing "Love amongst the Roses" for perhaps thirty times, without invitation, and without applause, had in re-

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venge moodily resigned himself to slumber—not so deep, doubtless, as the coachman's, but deep enough for mischief. And thus at last, about ten miles from Preston, it came about that I found myself left in charge of his majesty's London and Glasgow mail, then running at the least twelve miles an hour.

What made this negligence less criminal than else it must have been thought, was the condition of the roads at night during the assizes. At that time, all the law business of populous Liverpool, and also of populous Manchester, with its vast cincture of populous rural districts, was called up by ancient usage to the tribunal of Lilliputian Lancaster. To break up this old traditional usage required, 1, a conflict with powerful established interests; 2, a large system of new arrangements; and 3, a new parliamentary statute. But as yet this change was merely in contemplation. As things were at present, twice in the year so vast a body of business rolled northwards from the southern quarter of the county, that for a fortnight at least it occupied the severe exertions of two judges in its despatch. The consequence of this was, that every horse available for such a service, along the whole line of road, was exhausted in carrying down the multitudes of people who were parties to the different suits. By sunset, therefore, it usually happened that, through utter exhaustion amongst men and horses, the roads sank into profound silence. Except the exhaustion in the vast adjacent county of York from a con-

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tested election, no such silence succeeding to no such fiery uproar was ever witnessed in England.

On this occasion, the usual silence and solitude prevailed along the road. Not a hoof nor a wheel was to be heard. And to strengthen this false luxurious confidence in the noiseless roads, it happened also that the night was one of peculiar solemnity and peace. For my own part, though slightly alive to the possibilities of peril, I had so far yielded to the influence of the mighty calm as to sink into a profound reverie. The month was August, in the middle of which lay my own birthday—a festival to every thoughtful man suggesting solemn and often sigh-born thoughts. The county was my own native county—upon which, in its southern section, more than upon any equal area known to man past or present, had descended the original curse of labour in its heaviest form, not mastering the bodies only of men as of slaves, or criminals in mines, but working through the fiery will. Upon no equal space of earth was, or ever had been, the same energy of human power put forth daily. At this particular season also of the assizes, that dreadful hurricane of flight and pursuit, as it might have seemed to a stranger, which swept to and from Lancaster all day long, hunting the county up and down, and regularly subsiding back into silence about sunset, could not fail (when united with this permanent distinction of Lancashire as the very metropolis and citadel of labour) to point

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the thoughts pathetically upon that counter-vision of rest, of saintly repose from strife and sorrow, towards which, as to their secret haven, the profounder aspirations of man's heart are in solitude continually travelling. Obliquely upon our left we were nearing the sea, which also must, under the present circumstances, be repeating the general state of halcyon repose. The sea, the atmosphere, the light, bore each an orchestral part in this universal lull. Moon-light, and the first timid tremblings of the dawn, were by this time blending; and the blendings were brought into a still more exquisite state of unity by a slight silvery mist, motionless and dreamy, that covered the woods and fields, but with a veil of equable transparency. Except the feet of our own horses, which, running on a sandy margin of the road, made but little disturbance, there was no sound abroad. In the clouds, and on the earth, prevailed the same majestic peace; and in spite of all that the villain of a schoolmaster has done for the ruin of our sublimer thoughts, which are the thoughts of our infancy, we still believe in no such nonsense as a limited atmosphere. Whatever we may swear with our false feigning lips, in our faithful hearts we still believe, and must for ever believe, in fields of air traversing the total gulf between earth and the central heavens. Still, in the confidence of children that tread without fear *every* chamber in their father's house, and to whom no door is closed, we, in that Sabbath vision which sometimes is revealed for an hour upon

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nights like this, ascend with easy steps from the sorrow-stricken fields of earth, upwards to the sandals of God.

Suddenly, from thoughts like these, I was awakened to a sullen sound, as of some motion on the distant road. It stole upon the air for a moment; I listened in awe; but then it died away. Once roused, however, I could not but observe with alarm the quickened motion of our horses. Ten years' experience had made my eye learned in the valuing of motion; and I saw that we were now running thirteen miles an hour. I pretend to no presence of mind. On the contrary, my fear is, that I am miserably and shamefully deficient in that quality as regards action. The palsy of doubt and distraction hangs like some guilty weight of dark unfathomed remembrances upon my energies, when the signal is flying for *action*. But, on the other hand, this accursed gift I have, as regards *thought*, that in the first step towards the possibility of a misfortune, I see its total evolution; in the radix of the series I see too certainly and too instantly its entire expansion; in the first syllable of the dreadful sentence, I read already the last. It was not that I feared for ourselves. *Us*, our bulk and impetus charmed against peril in any collision. And I had ridden through too many hundreds of perils that were frightful to approach, that were matter of laughter to look back upon, the first face of which was horror—the parting face a jest, for any anxiety to rest upon *our* interests. The mail was not built, I felt assured nor

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bespoke, that could betray *me* who trusted to its protection. But any carriage that we could meet would be frail and light in comparison of ourselves. And I remarked this ominous accident of our situation. We were on the wrong side of the road. But then, it may be said, the other party, if other there was, might also be on the wrong side; and two wrongs might make a right. *That* was not likely. The same motive which had drawn *us* to the right-hand side of the road—viz., the luxury of the soft beaten sand, as contrasted with the paved centre—would prove attractive to others. The two adverse carriages would therefore, to a certainty, be travelling on the same side; and from this side, as not being ours in law, the crossing over to the other would, of course, be looked for from *us*. Our lamps, still lighted, would give the impression of vigilance on our part. And every creature that met us, would rely upon *us* for quartering. All this, and if the separate links of the anticipation had been a thousand times more, I saw; not discursively, or by effort, or by succession, but by one flash of horrid simultaneous intuition.

Under this steady though rapid anticipation of the evil which *might* be gathering ahead, ah! what a sullen mystery of fear, what a sigh of wo, was that which stole upon the air, as again the far-off sound of a wheel was heard! A whisper it was—a whisper from, perhaps, four miles off—secretly announcing a ruin that, being foreseen, was not the less inevitable; that, being known, was not, therefore, healed.

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What could be done—who was it that could do it—to check the storm-flight of these maniacal horses? Could I not seize the reins from the grasp of the slumbering coachman? You, reader, think that it would have been in *your* power to do so. And I quarrel not with your estimate of yourself. But, from the way in which the coachman's hand was viced between his upper and lower thigh, this was impossible. Easy, was it? See, then, that bronze equestrian statue. The cruel rider has kept the bit in his horse's mouth for two centuries. Unbridle him, for a minute, if you please, and wash his mouth with water. Easy, was it? Unhorse me, then, that imperial rider; knock me those marble feet from those marble stirrups of Charlemagne.

The sounds ahead strengthened, and were now too clearly the sounds of wheels. Who and what could it be? Was it industry in a taxed cart? Was it youthful gaiety in a gig? Was it sorrow that loitered, or joy that raced? For as yet the snatches of sound were too intermitting, from distance, to decipher the character of the motion. Whoever were the travellers, something must be done to warn them. Upon the other party rests the active responsibility, but upon *us*—and, wo is me! that *us* was reduced to my frail opium-shattered self—rests the responsibility of warning. Yet, how should this be accomplished? Might I not sound the guard's horn? Already, on the first thought, I was making my way over the roof to the guard's seat. But this, from the

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will die no less: and why not? Wherefore should we grieve that there is one craven less in the world? No; let him perish, without a pitying thought of ours wasted upon him; and, in that case, all our grief will be reserved for the fate of the helpless girl who now, upon the least shadow of failure in *him*, must, by the fiercest of translations—must, without time for a prayer—must, within seventy seconds, stand before the judgment-seat of God.

But craven he was not: sudden had been the call upon him, and sudden was his answer to the call. He saw, he heard, he comprehended, the ruin that was coming down: already its gloomy shadow darkened above him; and already he was measuring his strength to deal with it. Ah! what a vulgar thing does courage seem, when we see nations buying it and selling it for a shilling a-day: ah! what a sublime thing does courage seem, when some fearful summons on the great deeps of life carries a man, as if running before a hurricane, up to the giddy crest of some tumultuous crisis, from which lie two courses, and a voice says to him audibly, “One way lies hope; take the other, and mourn for ever!” How grand a triumph, if, even then, amidst the raving of all around him, and the frenzy of the danger, the man is able to confront his situation—is able to retire for a moment into solitude with God, and to seek his counsel from *Him*!

For seven seconds, it might be, of his seventy, the stranger settled his countenance steadfastly upon us, as if to search and value every element

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in the conflict before him. For five seconds more of his seventy he sat immovably, like one that mused on some great purpose. For five more, perhaps, he sat with eyes upraised, like one that prayed in sorrow, under some extremity of doubt, for light that should guide him to the better choice. Then suddenly he rose; stood upright; and by a powerful strain upon the reins, raising his horse's fore-feet from the ground, he slewed him round on the pivot of his hind-legs, so as to plant the little equipage in a position nearly at right angles to ours. Thus far his condition was not improved; except as a first step had been taken towards the possibility of a second. If no more were done, nothing was done; for the little carriage still occupied the very centre of our path, though in an altered direction. Yet even now it may not be too late: fifteen of the seventy seconds may still be unexhausted; and one almighty bound may avail to clear the ground. Hurry, then, hurry! for the flying moments—*they* hurry! Oh, hurry, hurry, my brave young man! for the cruel hoofs of our horses—*they* also hurry! Fast are the flying moments, faster are the hoofs of our horses. But fear not for *him*, if human energy can suffice; faithful was he that drove to his terrific duty; faithful was the horse to *his* command. One blow, one impulse given with voice and hand, by the stranger, one rush from the horse, one bound as if in the act of rising to a fence, landed the docile creature's fore-feet upon the crown or arching centre of the road. The larger half of

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that unparalleled situation. From the silence and deep peace of this saintly summer night—from the pathetic blending of this sweet moonlight, dawnlight, dreamlight—from the manly tenderness of this flattering, whispering, murmuring love—suddenly as from the woods and fields—suddenly as from the chambers of the air opening in revelation—suddenly as from the ground yawning at her feet, leaped upon her, with the flashing of cataracts, Death the crowned phantom, with all the equipage of his terrors, and the tiger roar of his voice.

The moments were numbered; the strife was finished; the vision was closed. In the twinkling of an eye, our flying horses had carried us to the termination of the umbraegeous aisle; at right angles we wheeled into our former direction; the turn of the road carried the scene out of my eyes in an instant, and swept it into my dreams for ever.

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# DREAM-FUGUE

## SECTION THE THIRD DREAM-FUGUE

Founded on the preceding theme of Sudden  
Death

"Whence the sound  
Of instruments that made melodious chime  
Was heard, of harp and organ; and who moved  
Their stops and chords was seen; his volant touch  
Instinct through all proportions low and high  
Fled and pursued transverse the resonant fugue."

—*Par. Lost, B. xi.*

### *Tumultuosissimamente*

Passion of sudden death! that once in youth  
I read and interpreted by the shadows of thy  
averted signs!—rapture of panic taking the  
shape (which amongst tombs in churches I  
have seen) of woman bursting her sepulchral  
bonds—of woman's Ionic form bending for-  
ward from the ruins of her grave with arching  
foot, with eyes upraised, with clasped adoring  
hands—waiting, watching, trembling, praying  
for the trumpet's call to rise from dust for ever!  
Ah, vision too fearful of shuddering humanity  
on the brink of almighty abysses!—vision that  
didst start back, that didst reel away, like a  
shrivelling scroll from before the wrath of fire  
racing on the wings of the wind! Epilepsy so  
brief of horror, wherefore is it that thou canst  
not die? Passing so suddenly into darkness,  
wherefore is it that still thou sheddest thy sad  
funeral blights upon the gorgeous mosaics of

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local vortex gave a wheeling bias to her course, and off she forged without a shock. As she ran past us, high aloft amongst the shrouds stood the lady of the pinnace. The deeps opened ahead in malice to receive her, towering surges of foam ran after her, the billows were fierce to catch her. But far away she was borne into desert spaces of the sea : whilst still by sight I followed her, as she ran before the howling gale, chased by angry sea-birds and by maddening billows; still I saw her, as at the moment when she ran past us, standing amongst the shrouds, with her white draperies streaming before the wind. There she stood, with hair dishevelled, one hand clutched amongst the tackling—rising, sinking, fluttering, trembling, praying—there for leagues I saw her as she stood, raising at intervals one hand to heaven, amidst the fiery crests of the pursuing waves and the raving of the storm ; until at last, upon a sound from afar of malicious laughter and mockery, all was hidden for ever in driving showers ; and afterwards, but when I know not, nor how,

### III

Sweet funeral bells from some incalculable distance, wailing over the dead that die before the dawn, awakened me as I slept in a boat moored to some familiar shore. The morning twilight even then was breaking; and, by the dusky revelations which it spread, I saw a girl, adorned with a garland of white roses about

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her head for some great festival, running along the solitary strand in extremity of haste. Her running was the running of panic; and often she looked back as to some dreadful enemy in the rear. But when I leaped ashore, and followed on her steps to warn her of a peril in front, alas! from me she fled as from another peril, and vainly I shouted to her of quicksands that lay ahead. Faster and faster she ran; round a promontory of rocks she wheeled out of sight; in an instant I also wheeled round it, but only to see the treacherous sands gathering above her head. Already her person was buried; only the fair young head and the diadem of white roses around it were still visible to the pitying heavens; and, last of all, was visible one white marble arm. I saw by the early twilight this fair young head, as it was sinking down to darkness—saw this marble arm, as it rose above her head and her treacherous grave, tossing, faltering, rising, clutching as at some false deceiving hand stretched out from the clouds—saw this marble arm uttering her dying hope, and then uttering her dying despair. The head, the diadem, the arm—these all had sunk; at last over these also the cruel quicksand had closed; and no memorial of the fair young girl remained on earth, except my own solitary tears, and the funeral bells from the desert seas, that, rising again more softly, sang a requiem over the grave of the buried child, and over her blighted dawn.

I sat, and wept in secret the tears that men have ever given to the memory of those that

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died before the dawn, and by the treachery of earth, our mother. But suddenly the tears and funeral bells were hushed by a shout as of many nations, and by a roar as from some great king's artillery, advancing rapidly along the valleys, and heard afar by echoes from the mountains. "Hush!" I said, as I bent my ear earthwards to listen—"hush!—this either is the very anarchy of strife, or else"—and then I listened more profoundly, and whispered as I raised my head—"or else, oh heavens! it is victory that is final, victory that swallows up all strife".

## IV

Immediately, in trance, I was carried over land and sea to some distant kingdom, and placed upon a triumphal car, amongst companions crowned with laurel. The darkness of gathering midnight, brooding over all the land, hid from us the mighty crowds that were weaving restlessly about ourselves as a centre: we heard them, but saw them not. Tidings had arrived, within an hour, of a grandeur that measured itself against centuries; too full of pathos they were, too full of joy, to utter themselves by other language than by tears, by restless anthems, and *Tec Deumis* reverberated from the choirs and orchestras of earth. These tidings we that sat upon the laurelled car had it for our privilege to publish amongst all nations. And already, by signs audible through the darkness, by snortings and tramplings, our angry

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horses, that knew no fear of fleshly weariness, upbraided us with delay. Wherefore *was* it that we delayed? We waited for a secret word, that should bear witness to the hope of nations, as now accomplished for ever. At midnight the secret word arrived; which word was— Waterloo and Recovered Christendom! The dreadful word shone by its own light; before us it went; high above our leaders' heads it rode, and spread a golden light over the paths which we traversed. Every city, at the presence of the secret word, threw open its gates. The rivers were conscious as we crossed. All the forests, as we ran along their margins, shivered in homage to the secret word. And the darkness comprehended it.

Two hours after midnight we approached a mighty Minster. Its gates, which rose to the clouds, were closed. But when the dreadful word, that rode before us, reached them with its golden light, silently they moved back upon their hinges; and at a flying gallop our equipage entered the grand aisle of the cathedral. Headlong was our pace; and at every altar, in the little chapels and oratories to the right hand and left of our course, the lamps, dying or sickening, kindled anew in sympathy with the secret word that was flying past. Forty leagues we might have run in the cathedral, and as yet no strength of morning light had reached us, when before us we saw the aerial galleries of organ and choir. Every pinnacle of the fret-work, every station of advantage amongst the traceries, was crested by white-robed choristers,

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that sang deliverance; that wept no more tears, as once their fathers had wept; but at intervals that sang together to the generations, saying,

“Chant the deliverer’s praise in every tongue”,  
and receiving answers from afar,

“Such as once in heaven and earth were sung”.

And of their chanting was no end; of our headlong pace was neither pause nor slackening.

Thus, as we ran like torrents—thus, as we swept with bridal rapture over the Campo Santo of the cathedral graves—suddenly we became aware of a vast necropolis rising upon the far-off horizon—a city of sepulchres, built within the saintly cathedral for the warrior dead that rested from their feuds on earth. Of purple granite was the necropolis; yet, in the first minute, it lay like a purple stain upon the horizon, so mighty was the distance. In the second minute it trembled through many changes, growing into terraces and towers of wondrous altitude, so mighty was the pace. In the third minute already, with our dreadful gallop, we were entering its suburbs. Vast sarcophagi rose on every side, having towers and turrets that, upon the limits of the central aisle, strode forward with haughty intrusion, that ran back with mighty shadows into answering recesses. Every sarcophagus showed many bas-reliefs—bas-reliefs of battles and of battle-fields; battles from forgotten ages—battles from

## DREAM-FUGUE

yesterday—battle-fields that, long since, nature had healed and reconciled to herself with the sweet oblivion of flowers—battle-fields that were yet angry and crimson with carnage. Where the terraces ran, there did *we* run; where the towers curved, there did *we* curve. With the flight of swallows our horses swept round every angle. Like rivers in flood, wheeling round headlands—like hurricanes that ride into the secrets of forests—faster than ever light unwove the mazes of darkness, our flying equipage carried earthly passions, kindled warrior instincts, amongst the dust that lay around us—dust oftentimes of our noble fathers that had slept in God from Créci to Trafalgar. And now had we reached the last sarcophagus, now were we abreast of the last bas-relief, already had we recovered the arrow-like flight of the illimitable central aisle, when coming up this aisle to meet us we beheld afar off a female child, that rode in a carriage as frail as flowers. The mists, which went before her, hid the fawns that drew her, but could not hide the shells and tropic flowers with which she played—but could not hide the lovely smiles by which she uttered her trust in the mighty cathedral, and in the cherubim that looked down upon her from the mighty shafts of its pillars. Face to face she was meeting us; face to face she rode, as if danger there was none. “Oh, baby!” I exclaimed, “shalt thou be the ransom for Waterloo? Must we, that carry tidings of great joy to every people, be messengers of ruin to thee?” In horror I rose at the thought; but

## THE ENGLISH MAIL-COACH

rang through the dreadful *sancus*. Oh, darkness of the grave! that from the crimson alta and from the fiery font were visited and searched by the effulgence in the angel's eye—were these indeed thy children? Pomps of life, that, from the burials of centuries, rose again to the voice of perfect joy, did ye indeed mingle with the festivals of Death? Lo! as I looked back for seventy leagues through the mighty cathedral, I saw the quick and the dead that sang together to God, together that sang to the generations of man. All the hosts of jubilation, like armies that ride in pursuit, moved with one step. Us, that, with laurelled heads, were passing from the cathedral, they overtook, and, as with a garment, they wrapped us round with thunders greater than our own. As brothers we moved together; to the dawn that advanced —to the stars that fled; rendering thanks to God in the highest—that, having hid His face through one generation behind thick clouds of War, once again was ascending —from the Campo Santo of Waterloo was ascending—in the visions of Peace; rendering thanks for thee, young girl! whom, having overshadowed with His ineffable passion of death, suddenly did God relent; suffered thy angel to turn aside His arm; and even in thee, sister unknown! shown to me for a moment only to be hidden for ever, found an occasion to glorify His goodness. A thousand times, amongst the phantoms of sleep, have I seen thee entering the gates of the golden dawn—with the secret word riding before thee — with the armies of the

## DREAM-FUGUE

grave behind thee ; seen thee sinking, rising,  
raving, despairing ; a thousand times in the  
worlds of sleep have seen thee followed by  
God's angel through storms ; through desert  
seas ; through the darkness of quicksands ;  
through dreams, and the dreadful revelations  
that are in dreams—only that at the last, with  
one sling of His victorious arm, He might snatch  
thee back from ruin, and might emblazon in  
thy deliverance the endless resurrections of His  
love !

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to disturbance from the gathering agitation of our present English life. Already, what by the procession through fifty years of mighty revolutions amongst the kingdoms of the earth, what by the continual development of vast physical agencies,—steam in all its applications, light getting under harness as a slave for man, powers from heaven descending upon education and accelerations of the press, powers from hell (as it might seem, but these also celestial) coming round upon artillery and the forces of destruction,—the eye of the calmest observer is troubled; the brain is haunted as if by some jealousy of ghostly beings moving amongst us; and it becomes too evident that, unless this colossal pace of advance can be retarded (a thing not to be expected), or, which is happily more probable, can be met by counter-forces of corresponding magnitude,—forces in the direction of religion or profound philosophy that shall radiate centrifugally against this storm of life so perilously centripetal towards the vortex of the merely human,—left to itself, the natural tendency of so chaotic a tumult must be to evil; for some minds to lunacy, for others a reagency of fleshly torpor. How much this fierce condition of eternal hurry upon an arena too exclusively human in its interests is likely to defeat the grandeur which is latent in all men, may be seen in the ordinary effect from living too constantly in varied company. The word *dissipation*, in one of its uses, expresses that effect; the action of thought and feeling is consciously

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dissipated and squandered. To reconcentrate them into meditative habits, a necessity is felt by all observing persons for sometimes retiring from crowds. No man ever will unfold the capacities of his own intellect who does not at least checker his life with solitude. How much solitude, so much power. Or, if not true in that rigour of expression, to this formula undoubtedly it is that the wise rule of life must approximate.

Among the powers in man which suffer by this too intense life of the *social* instincts, none suffers more than the power of dreaming. Let no man think this a trifle. The machinery for dreaming planted in the human brain was not planted for nothing. That faculty, in alliance with the mystery of darkness, is the one great tube through which man communicates with the shadowy. And the dreaming organ, in connexion with the heart, the eye, and the ear, composes the magnificent apparatus which forces the infinite into the chambers of a human brain, and throws dark reflections from eternities below all life upon the mirrors of that mysterious *camera obscura*—the sleeping mind.

But, if this faculty suffers from the decay of solitude, which is becoming a visionary idea in England, on the other hand it is certain that some merely physical agencies can and do assist the faculty of dreaming almost preternaturally. Amongst these is intense exercise,—to some extent at least, for some persons; but beyond all others is opium: which indeed

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seems to possess a *specific* power in that direction; not merely for exalting the colours of dream-scenery, but for deepening its shadows, and, above all, for strengthening the sense of its fearful *realities*.

The *Opium Confessions* were written with some slight secondary purpose of exposing this specific power of opium upon the faculty of dreaming, but much more with the purpose of displaying the faculty itself; and the outline of the work travelled in this course:—Supposing a reader acquainted with the true object of the *Confessions* as here stated,—namely, the revelation of dreaming,—to have put this question:

“But how came you to dream more splendidly than others?”

The answer would have been—

“Because (*præmissis præmittendis*) I took excessive quantities of opium”.

Secondly, suppose him to say, “But how came you to take opium in this excess?”

The answer to *that* would be, “Because some early events in my life had left a weakness in one organ which required (or seemed to require) that stimulant”.

Then, because the opium dreams could not always have been understood without a knowledge of these events, it became necessary to relate them. Now, these two questions and answers exhibit the *law* of the work,—that is, the principle which determined its form,—but precisely in the inverse or regressive order. The work itself opened with the narration of my early adventures. These, in the natural

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order of succession, led to the opium as a resource for healing their consequences; and the opium as naturally led to the dreams. But, in the synthetic order of presenting the facts, what stood last in the succession of development stood first in the order of my purposes.

At the close of this little work, the reader was instructed to believe, and *truly* instructed, that I had mastered the tyranny of opium. The fact is that *twice* I mastered it, and by efforts even more prodigious in the second of these cases than in the first. But one error I committed in both. I did not connect with the abstinence from opium, so trying to the fortitude under *any* circumstances, that enormity of exercise which (as I have since learned) is the one sole resource for making it durable. I overlooked, in those days, the one *sine qua non* for making the triumph permanent. Twice I sank, twice I rose again. A third time I sank; partly from the cause mentioned (the oversight as to exercise), partly from other causes, on which it avails not now to trouble the reader. I could moralize, if I chose; and perhaps *he* will moralize, whether I choose it or not. But, in the meantime, neither of us is acquainted properly with the circumstances of the case: I, from natural bias of judgment, not altogether acquainted; and he (with his permission) not at all.

During this third prostration before the dark idol, and after some years, new and monstrous phenomena began slowly to arise. For a time, these were neglected as accidents, or

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palliated by such remedies as I knew of. But, when I could no longer conceal from myself that these dreadful symptoms were moving forward for ever, by a pace steadily, solemnly, and equably increasing, I endeavoured, with some feeling of panic, for a third time to retrace my steps. But I had not reversed my motions for many weeks before I became profoundly aware that this was impossible. Or, in the imagery of my dreams, which translated everything into their own language, I saw, through vast avenues of gloom, those towering gates of ingress which hitherto had always seemed to stand open now at last barred against my retreat, and hung with funeral crape.

As applicable to this tremendous situation (the situation of one escaping by some refluent current from the maelstrom roaring for him in the distance, who finds suddenly that this current is but an eddy wheeling round upon the same maelstrom), I have since remembered a striking incident in a modern novel.

A lady-abbess of a convent, herself suspected of Protestant leanings, and in that way already disarmed of all effectual power, finds one of her own nuns (whom she knows to be innocent) accused of an offence leading to the most terrific of punishments. The nun will be immured alive if she is found guilty; and there is no chance that she will not,—for the evidence against her is strong, unless something were made known that cannot be made known, and the judges are hostile. All follows in the order of the reader's fears. The witnesses

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depose; the evidence is without effectual contradiction; the conviction is declared; the judgment is delivered; nothing remains but to see execution done. At this crisis, the abbess, alarmed too late for effectual interposition, considers with herself that, according to the regular forms, there will be one single night open, during which the prisoner cannot be withdrawn from her own separate jurisdiction. This one night, therefore, she will use, at any hazard to herself, for the salvation of her friend. At midnight, when all is hushed in the convent, the lady traverses the passages which lead to the cells of prisoners. She bears a master-key under her professional habit. As this will open every door in every corridor, already, by anticipation, she feels the luxury of holding her emancipated friend within her arms. Suddenly she has reached the door; she descries a dusky object; she raises her lamp; and, ranged within the recess of the entrance, she beholds the funeral banner of the holy office, and the black robes of its inexorable officials.

I apprehend that, in a situation such as this, supposing it a real one, the lady-abbess would not start, would not show any marks externally of consternation or horror. The case was beyond *that*. The sentiment which attends the sudden revelation that *all is lost* silently is gathered up into the heart; it is too deep for gestures or for words; and no part of it passes to the outside. Were the ruin conditional, or were it in any point doubtful, it would be natural to utter ejaculations, and to seek sym-

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pathy. But, where the ruin is understood to be absolute, where sympathy cannot be consolation, and counsel cannot be hope, this is otherwise. The voice perishes; the gestures are frozen; and the spirit of man flies back upon its own centre. I, at least, upon seeing those awful gates closed and hung with draperies of woe, as for a death already past, spoke not, nor started, nor groaned. One profound sigh ascended from my heart, and I was silent for days.



In the *Opium Confessions* I touched a little upon the extraordinary power connected with opium (after long use) of amplifying the dimensions of time. Space, also, it amplifies by degrees that are sometimes terrific. But time it is upon which the exalting and multiplying power of opium chiefly spends its operation. Time becomes infinitely elastic, stretching out to such immeasurable and vanishing termini that it seems ridiculous to compute the sense of it, on waking, by expressions commensurate to human life. As in starry fields one computes by diameters of the Earth's orbit, or of Jupiter's, so, in valuing the *virtual* time lived during some dreams, the measurement by generations is ridiculous — by millennia is ridiculous; by æons, I should say, if æons were more determinate, would be also ridiculous.

Here pause, reader! Imagine yourself seated in some cloud-scaling swing, oscillating



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its *proportions*, but sufficient to indicate the *quality* of the balance which I had contemplated. He who has *really* read the preceding parts of these present Confessions will be aware that a stricter scrutiny of the past, such as was natural after the whole economy of the dreaming faculty had been convulsed beyond all precedents on record, led me to the conviction that not one agency, but two agencies had co-operated to the tremendous result. The nursery experience had been the ally and the natural coefficient of the opium. For that reason it was that the nursery experience has been narrated. Logically it bears the very same relation to the convulsions of the dreaming faculty as the opium. The idealizing tendency existed in the dream-theatre of my childhood; but the preternatural strength of its action and colouring was first developed after the confluence of the *two* causes. The reader must suppose me at Oxford; twelve years and a half are gone by; I am in the glory of youthful happiness: but I have now first tampered with opium; and now first the agitations of my childhood reopened in strength; now first they swept in upon the brain with power and the grandeur of recovered life under the separate and the concurring inspirations of opium.

# THE PALIMPSEST OF THE BRAIN

## THE PALIMPSEST OF THE HUMAN BRAIN

You know perhaps, masculine reader, better than I can tell you, what is a *Palimpsest*. Possibly you have one in your own library. But yet, for the sake of others who may *not* know, or may have forgotten, suffer me to explain it here, lest any female reader who honours these papers with her notice should tax me with explaining it once too seldom; which would be worse to bear than a simultaneous complaint from twelve proud men that I had explained it three times too often. You, therefore, fair reader, understand that for *your* accommodation exclusively I explain the meaning of this word. It is Greek; and our sex enjoys the office and privilege of standing counsel to yours in all questions of Greek. We are, under favour, perpetual and hereditary dragomans to you. So that if, by accident, you know the meaning of a Greek word, yet by courtesy to us, your counsel learned in that matter, you will always seem *not* to know it.

A palimpsest, then, is a membrane or roll cleansed of its manuscript by reiterated successions.

What was the reason that the Greeks and the Romans had not the advantage of printed books? The answer will be, from ninety-nine persons in a hundred,—Because the mystery of printing was not then discovered. But this is altogether a mistake. The secret of printing

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has now become the chief obstacle to its value; nay, has totally extinguished its value, unless it can be dissociated from the connexion. Yet, if this unlinking *can* be effected, then, fast as the inscription upon the membrane is sinking into rubbish, the membrane itself is reviving in its separate importance; and, from bearing a ministerial value, the vellum has come at last to absorb the whole value.

Hence the importance for our ancestors that the separation *should* be effected. Hence it arose in the Middle Ages as a considerable object for chemistry to discharge the writing from the roll, and thus to make it available for a new succession of thoughts. The soil, if cleansed from what once had been hot-house plants, but now were held to be weeds, would be ready to receive a fresh and more appropriate crop. In that object the monkish chemists succeeded; but after a fashion which seems almost incredible,—incredible not as regards the extent of their success, but as regards the delicacy of restraints under which it moved,—so equally adjusted was their success to the immediate interests of that period, and to the reverisory objects of our own. They did the thing; but not so radically as to prevent us, their posterity, from *undoing* it. They expelled the writing sufficiently to leave a field for the new manuscript, and yet not sufficiently to make the traces of the elder manuscript irrecoverable for us. Could magic, could Hermes Trismegistus, have done more? What would you think, fair reader, of a pro-

## THE PALIMPSEST OF THE BRAIN

blem such as this:—to write a book which should be sense for your own generation, non-sense for the next; should revive into sense for the next after that, but again become non-sense for the fourth; and so on by alternate successions sinking into night or blazing into day, like the Sicilian river Arethusa and the English river Mole, or like the undulating motions of a flattened stone which children cause to skim the breast of a river, now diving below the water, now grazing its surface, sinking heavily into darkness, rising buoyantly into light, through a long vista of alternations? Such a problem, you say, is impossible. But really it is a problem not harder apparently than to bid a generation kill, so that a subsequent generation may call back into life; bury, so that posterity may command to rise again. Yet *that* was what the rude chemistry of past ages effected when coming into combination with the reaction from the more refined chemistry of our own. Had *they* been better chemists, had *we* been worse, the mixed result,—namely, that, dying for *them*, the flower should revive for *us*,—could not have been effected. They did the thing proposed to them: they did it effectually, for they founded upon it all that was wanted: and yet ineffectually, since we unravelled their work,—effacing all above which they had superscribed, restoring all below which they had effaced.

Here, for instance, is a parchment which contained some Grecian tragedy,—the Agamemnon of Æschylus, or the Phœnissæ of

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funeral mists, is but a type of what we have done with Palimpsests. We have backed upon each phœnix in the long *regressus*, and forced him to expose his ancestral phœnix, sleeping in the ashes below his own ashes. Our good old forefathers would have been aghast at our sorceries; and, if they speculated on the propriety of burning Dr. Faustus, *as* they would have burned by acclamation. Trial there would have been none; and they could not otherwise have satisfied their horror of the brazen profligacy marking our modern magic than by ploughing up the houses of all who had been parties to it, and sowing the ground with salt.

Fancy not, reader, that this tumult of images, illustrative or allusive, moves under any impulse or purpose of mirth. It is but the coruscation of a restless understanding, often made ten times more so by irritation of the nerves, such as you will first learn to comprehend (its *how* and its *why*) some stage or two ahead. The image, the memorial, the record, which for me is derived from a palimpsest as to one great fact in our human being, and which immediately I will show you, is but too repellent of laughter; or, even if laughter *had* been possible, it would have been such laughter as oftentimes is thrown off from the fields of ocean,—laughter that hides, or that seems to evade, mustering tumult; foam-bells that weave garlands of phosphoric radiance for one moment round the eddies of gleaming abysses; mimicries of earth-born flowers that for the eye

# THE PALIMPSEST OF THE BRAIN

raise phantoms of gaiety, as oftentimes for the ear they raise the echoes of fugitive laughter, mixing with the ravings and choir-voices of an angry sea.

What else than a natural and mighty palimpsest is the human brain? Such a palimpsest is my brain; such a palimpsest, oh reader! is yours. Everlasting layers of ideas, images, feelings, have fallen upon your brain softly as light. Each succession has seemed to bury all that went before. And yet, in reality, not one has been extinguished. And, if in the vellum palimpsest, lying amongst the other *dictata* of human archives or libraries, there is anything fantastic or which moves to laughter, as oftentimes there is in the grotesque collisions of those successive themes, having no natural connexion, which by pure accident have consecutively occupied the roll, yet, in our own heaven-created palimpsest, the deep memorial palimpsest of the brain, there are not and cannot be such incoherencies. The fleeting accidents of a man's life, and its external shows, may indeed be irrelate and incongruous; but the organizing principles which fuse into harmony, and gather about fixed predetermined centres, whatever heterogeneous elements life may have accumulated from without, will not permit the grandeur of human unity greatly to be violated, or its ultimate repose to be troubled, in the retrospect from dying moments, or from other great convulsions.

Such a convulsion is the struggle of gradual suffocation, as in drowning; and in the original

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*Opium Confessions* I mentioned a case of that nature communicated to me by a lady from her own childish experience. The lady was then still living, though of unusually great age; and I may mention that amongst her faults never was numbered any levity of principle, or carelessness of the most scrupulous veracity, but, on the contrary, such faults as arise from austerity, too harsh, perhaps, and gloomy, indulgent neither to others nor herself. And, at the time of relating this incident, when already very old, she had become religious to asceticism. According to my present belief, she had completed her ninth year when, playing by the side of a solitary brook, she fell into one of its deepest pools. Eventually, but after what lapse of time nobody ever knew, she was saved from death by a farmer, who, riding in some distant lane, had seen her rise to the surface; but not until she had descended within the abyss of death and looked into its secrets, as far, perhaps, as ever human eye *can* have looked that had permission to return. At a certain stage of this descent, a blow seemed to strike her; phosphoric radiance sprang forth from her eyeballs; and immediately a mighty theatre expanded within her brain. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, every act, every design of her past life, lived again, arraying themselves not as a succession, but as parts of a coexistence. Such a light fell upon the whole path of her life backwards into the shades of infancy as the light, perhaps, which wrapt the destined Apostle on his road, to

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Damascus. Yet that light blinded for a season; but hers poured celestial vision upon the brain, so that her consciousness became omnipresent at one moment to every feature in the infinite review.

This anecdote was treated sceptically at the time by some critics. But, besides that it has since been confirmed by other experience essentially the same, reported by other parties in the same circumstances, who had never heard of each other, the true point for astonishment is not the *simultaneity* of arrangement under which the past events of life, though in fact successive, had formed their dread line of revelation. This was but a secondary phenomenon; the deeper lay in the resurrection itself, and the possibility of resurrection for what had so long slept in the dust. A pall, deep as oblivion, had been thrown by life over every trace of these experiences; and yet suddenly, at a silent command, at the signal of a blazing rocket sent up from the brain, the pall draws up, and the whole depths of the theatre are exposed. Here was the greater mystery. Now, this mystery is liable to no doubt; for it is repeated, and ten thousand times repeated, by opium, for those who are its martyrs.

Yes, reader, countless are the mysterious handwritings of grief or joy which have inscribed themselves successively upon the palimpsest of your brain; and, like the annual leaves of aboriginal forests, or the undissolving snows on the Himalaya, or light falling upon light, the endless strata have covered up each



# VISION OF LIFE

## VISION OF LIFE

Upon me, as upon others scattered thinly by tens and twenties over every thousand years, fell too powerfully and too early the vision of life. The horror of life mixed itself already in earliest youth with the heavenly sweetness of life; that grief which one in a hundred has sensibility enough to gather from the sad retrospect of life in its closing stage for *me* shed its dews as a prelibation upon the fountains of life whilst yet sparkling to the morning sun. I saw from afar and from before what I was to see from behind. Is this the description of an early youth passed in the shades of gloom? No; but of a youth passed in the divinest happiness. And, if the reader has (which so few have) the passion without which there is no reading of the legend and superscription upon man's brow, if he is not (as most are) deafier than the grave to every deep note that sighs upwards from the Delphic caves of human life, he will know that the rapture of life (or anything which by approach can merit that name). does not arise, unless as perfect music arises, music of Mozart or Beethoven, by the confluence of the mighty and terrific discords with the subtle concords. Not by contrast, or as reciprocal foils, do these elements act,—which is the feeble conception of many,—but by union. They are the sexual forces in music: "male and female created he them"; and these mighty antagonists do not

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## MEMORIAL SUSPIRIA

Heavens ! when I look back to the sufferings which I have witnessed or heard of, I say, if life could throw open its long suites of chambers to our eyes from some station *beforehand*, —if from some secret stand we could look by *anticipation* along its vast corridors, and aside into the recesses opening upon them from either hand, halls of tragedy or chambers of retribution,—simply in that small wing and no more of the great caravanserai which we ourselves shall haunt,—simply in that narrow tract of time, and no more, where we ourselves shall range, and confining our gaze to those and no others for whom personally we shall be interested,—What a recoil we should suffer of horror in our estimate of life ! What if those sudden catastrophes, or those inexpiable afflictions, which *have* already descended upon the people within my own knowledge, and almost below my own eyes, all of them now gone past, and some long past, had been thrown open before me as a secret exhibition when first I and they stood within the vestibule of morning hopes,—when the calamities themselves had hardly begun to gather in their elements of possibility, and when some of the parties to them were as yet no more than infants ! The past viewed not *as* the past, but by a spectator who steps back ten years deeper into the rear in order that he may regard it as a future,—the calamity of 1840 contemplated

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from the station of 1830,—the doom that rang the knell of happiness viewed from a point of time when as yet it was neither feared nor would even have been intelligible,—the name that killed in 1843 which in 1835 would have struck no vibration upon the heart,—the portrait that on the day of her Majesty's coronation would have been admired by you with a pure disinterested admiration, but which, if seen to-day, would draw forth an involuntary groan: cases such as these are strangely moving for all who add deep thoughtfulness to deep sensibility. As the hastiest of improvisations, accept, fair reader (for such reader it is that will chiefly feel such an invocation of the past), three or four illustrations from my own experience:—

Who is this distinguished-looking young woman, with her eyes drooping, and the shadow of a dreadful shock yet fresh upon every feature? Who is the elderly lady, with her eyes flashing fire? Who is the downcast child of sixteen? What is that torn paper lying at their feet? Who is the writer? Whom does the paper concern? Ah! if she, if the central figure in the group—twenty-two at the moment when she is revealed to us—could, on her happy birthday at sweet seventeen, have seen the image of herself five years onwards just as *we* see it now, would she have prayed for life as for an absolute blessing? or would she not have prayed to be taken from the evil to come—to be taken away one evening, at least, before this day's sun arose? It is true,

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between their hearts. But she is in a far distant land. Who else is there at her call? Except God, nobody. Her aunt had somewhat sternly admonished her, though still with a relenting in her eye as she glanced aside at the expression in her niece's face, that she must "call pride to her assistance". Ay, true; but pride, though a strong ally in public, is apt in private to turn as treacherous as the worst of those against whom she is invoked. How could it be dreamed, by a person of sense, that a brilliant young man, of merits various and eminent in spite of his baseness, to whom for nearly two years this young woman had given her whole confiding love, might be dismissed from a heart like hers on the earliest summons of pride, simply because she herself had been dismissed from *his*, or seemed to have been dismissed, on a summons of mercenary calculation? Look! now that she is relieved from the weight of an unconfidential presence, she has sat for two hours with her head buried in her hands. At last she rises to look for something. A thought has struck her; and, taking a little golden key which hangs by a chain within her bosom, she searches for something locked up amongst her few jewels. What is it? It is a Bible exquisitely illuminated, with a letter attached by some pretty silken artifice to the blank leaves at the end. This letter is a beautiful record, wisely and pathetically composed, of maternal anxiety still burning strong in death, and yearning, when all objects beside were fast fading from *her* eyes,

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after one parting act of communion with the twin darlings of her heart. Both were thirteen years old, within a week or two, as on the night before her death they sat weeping by the bedside of their mother, and hanging on her lips, now for farewell whispers and now for farewell kisses. They both knew that, as her strength had permitted during the latter month of her life, she had thrown the last anguish of love in her beseeching heart into a letter of counsel to themselves. Through this, of which each sister had a copy, she trusted long to converse with her orphans. And the last promise which she had entreated on this evening from both was that in either of two contingencies they would review her counsels, and the passages to which she pointed their attention in the Scriptures: namely, first, in the event of any calamity that, for one sister or for both, should overspread their paths with total darkness; and, secondly, in the event of life flowing in too profound a stream of prosperity, so as to threaten them with an alienation of interest from all spiritual objects. She had not concealed that, of these two extreme cases, she would prefer for her own children the first. And now had that case arrived, indeed, which she in spirit had desired to meet. Nine years ago, just as the silvery voice of a dial in the dying lady's bedroom was striking nine, upon a summer evening, had the last visual ray streamed from her seeking eyes upon her orphan twins; after which, throughout the night, she had slept away into heaven. Now again had

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that memorable evening when we looked in upon the impassioned group,—upon the towering and denouncing aunt, the sympathizing but silent cousin, the poor, blighted niece, and the wicked letter lying in fragments at their feet.

Cloud, that hast revealed to us this young creature and her blighted hopes, close up again! And now, a few years later,—not more than four or five,—give back to us the latest arrears of the changes which thou concealest within thy draperies. Once more, “open sesame!” and show us a third generation.

Behold a lawn islanded with thickets! How perfect is the verdure; how rich the blossoming shrubberies that screen with verdurous walls from the possibility of intrusion, whilst by their own wandering line of distribution they shape, and umbrageously embay, what one might call•lawnly saloons and vestibules, sylvan galleries and closets! Some of these recesses, which unlink themselves as fluently as snakes, and unexpectedly as the shyest nooks, watery cells, and crypts, amongst the shores of a forest-lake, being formed by the mere caprices and ramblings of the luxuriant shrubs, are so small and so quiet that one might fancy them meant for boudoirs. Here is one that in a less fickle climate would make the loveliest of studies for a writer of breathings from some solitary heart, or of *suspiria* from some impassioned memory! And, opening from one angle of this embowered study, issues a little narrow corridor, that, after almost wheeling back upon itself in its playful mazes, finally widens into

## MEMORIAL SUSPIRIA

a little circular chamber; out of which there is no exit (except back again by the entrance), small or great; so that, adjacent to his study, the writer would command how sweet a bedroom, permitting him to lie the summer through, gazing all night long at the burning host of heaven. How silent *that* would be at the noon of summer nights,—how grave-like in its quiet! And yet need there be asked a stillness or a silence more profound than is felt at this present noon of day? One reason for such peculiar repose, over and above the tranquil character of the day, and the distance of the place from the high-roads, is the outer zone of woods which almost on every quarter invests the shrubberies, swathing them (as one may express it), belting them and overlooking them, from a varying distance of two and three furlongs, so as oftentimes to keep the winds at a distance. But, however caused and supported, the silence of these fanciful lawns and lawny chambers is oftentimes oppressive in the depths of summer to people unfamiliar with solitudes either mountainous or sylvan; and many would be apt to suppose that the villa to which these pretty shrubberies form the chief dependencies must be untenanted. But that is not the case. The house is inhabited, and by its own legal mistress, the proprietress of the whole domain; and not at all a silent mistress, but as noisy as most little ladies of five years old; for that is her age. Now, and just as we are speaking, you may hear her little joyous clamour, as she issues from the

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house. This way she comes, bounding like a fawn; and soon she rushes into the little recess which I pointed out as a proper study for any man who should be weaving the deep harmonies of memorial *suspiria*. But I fancy that she will soon dispossess it of that character, for her *suspiria* are not many at this stage of her life. Now she comes dancing into sight; and you see that, if she keeps the promise of her infancy, she will be an interesting creature to the eye in after-life. In other respects, also, she is an engaging child,—loving, natural, and wild as any one of her neighbours for some miles round,—namely, leverets, squirrels, and ring-doves. But what will surprise you most is that, although a child of pure English blood, she speaks very little English, but more Bengalee than perhaps you will find it convenient to construe. That is her ayah, who comes up from behind at a pace so different from her youthful mistress's. But, if their paces are different, in other things they agree most cordially; and dearly they love each other. In reality, the child has passed her whole life in the arms of this ayah. She remembers nothing elder than *her*; eldest of things is the ayah in her eyes; and, if the ayah should insist on her worshipping herself as the goddess Railroadina or Steamboatina, that made England, and the sea, and Bengal, it is certain that the little thing would do so, asking no question but this,—whether kissing would do for worshipping.

Every evening at nine o'clock, as the ayah sits by the little creature lying awake in bed,

## MEMORIAL SUSPIRIA

the silvery tongue of a dial tolls the hour. Reader, you know who she is. She is the granddaughter of her that faded away about sunset in gazing at her twin orphans. Her name is Grace. And she is the niece of that elder and once happy Grace who spent so much of her happiness in this very room, but whom, in her utter desolation, we saw in the boudoir, with the torn letter at her feet. She is the daughter of that other sister, wife to a military officer who died abroad. Little Grace never saw her grandmamma, nor her lovely aunt that was her namesake, nor consciously her mamma. She was born six months after the death of the elder Grace; and her mother saw her only through the mists of mortal suffering, which carried her off three weeks after the birth of her daughter.

This view was taken several years ago; and since then the younger Grace, in her turn, is under a cloud of affliction. But she is still under eighteen; and of her there may be hopes. Seeing such things in so short a space of years,—for the grandmother died at thirty-two,—we say,—“Death we can face; but, knowing as some of us do what is human life, which of us is it that without shuddering could (if consciously we were summoned) face the hour of birth?”

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on the wing. It has perished, or it is not born. It was, or it is not. Yet even this approximation to the truth is *infinitely* false. For again subdivide that solitary drop, which only was found to represent the present, into a lower series of similar fractions, and the actual present which you arrest measures now but the thirty-six-millionth of an hour; and so by infinite declensions the true and very present, in which only we live and enjoy, will vanish into a mote of a mote, distinguishable only by a heavenly vision. Therefore the present, which only man possesses, offers less capacity for his footing than the slenderest film that ever spider twisted from her womb. Therefore, also, even this incalculable shadow from the narrowest pencil of moonlight is more transitory than geometry can measure, or thought of angel can overtake. The time which *is* contracts into a mathematic point; and even that point perishes a thousand times before we can utter its birth. All is finite in the present; and even that finite is infinite in its velocity of flight towards death. But in God there is nothing finite; but in God there is nothing transitory; but in God there *can* be nothing that tends to death. Therefore it follows that for God there can be no present. The future is the present of God, and to the future it is that he sacrifices the human present. Therefore it is that he works by earthquake. Therefore it is that he works by grief. O, deep is the ploughing of earthquake! O, deep"—(and his voice swelled like a *sanctus* rising

## LEVANA

### LEVANA AND OUR LADIES OF SORROW

Oftentimes at Oxford I saw Levana in my dreams. I knew her by her Roman symbols. Who is Levana? Reader, that do not pretend to have leisure for very much scholarship, you will not be angry with me for telling you. Levana was the Roman goddess that performed for the new-born infant the earliest office of ennobling kindness,—typical, by its mode, of that grandeur which belongs to man everywhere, and of that benignity in powers invisible which even in Pagan worlds sometimes descends to sustain it. At the very moment of birth, just as the infant tasted for the first time the atmos-

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phere of our troubled planet, it was laid on the ground. *That* might bear different interpretations. But immediately, lest so grand a creature should grovel there for more than one instant, either the paternal hand, as proxy for the goddess Levana, or some near kinsman, as proxy for the father, raised it upright, bade it look erect as the king of all this world, and presented its forehead to the stars, saying, perhaps, in his heart, "Behold what is greater than yourselves!" This symbolic act represented the function of Levana. And that mysterious lady, who never revealed her face (except to me in dreams), but always acted by delegation, had her name from the Latin verb (as still it is the Italian verb) *levare*, to raise aloft.

This is the explanation of Levana. And hence it has arisen that some people have understood by Levana the tutelary power that controls the education of the nursery. She, that would not suffer at his birth even a prefigurative or mimic degradation for her awful ward, far less could be supposed to suffer the real degradation attaching to the non-development of his powers. She therefore watches over human education. Now, the word *editto*, with the penultimate short, was derived (by a process often exemplified in the crystallization of languages) from the word *educco*, with the penultimate long. Whatsoever *educes*, or develops, *educates*. By the education of Levana, therefore, is meant,—not the poor machinery that moves by spelling-books and grammars,

## LEVANA

but by that mighty system of central forces hidden in the deep bosom of human life, which by passion, by strife, by temptation, by the energies of resistance, works for ever upon children,—resting not day or night, any more than the mighty wheel of day and night themselves, whose moments, like restless spokes, are glimmering for ever as they revolve.

If, then, *these* are the ministries by which Levana works, how profoundly must she reverence the agencies of grief! But you, reader, think that children generally are not liable to grief such as mine. There are two senses in the word *generally*,—the sense of Euclid, where it means *universally* (or in the whole extent of the *genus*), and a foolish sense of this world, where it means *usually*. Now, I am far from saying that children universally are capable of grief like mine. But there are more than you ever heard of who die of grief in this island of ours. I will tell you a common case. The rules of Eton require that a boy on the *foundation* should be there twelve years: he is superannuated at eighteen; consequently he must come at six. Children torn away from mothers and sisters at that age not unfrequently die. I speak of what I know. The complaint is not entered by the registrar as grief; but *that* it is. Grief of that sort, and at that age, has killed more than ever have been counted amongst its martyrs.

Therefore it is that Levana often communes with the powers that shake man's heart; therefore it is that she dotes upon grief. “These

## SUSPIRIA DE PROFUNDIS

*Lachrymarum*, Our Lady of Tears. She it is that night and day raves and moans, calling for vanished faces. She stood in Rama, where a voice was heard of lamentation,— Rachel weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted. She it was that stood in Bethlehem on the night when Herod's sword swept its nurseries of Innocents, and the little feet were stiffened for ever which, heard at times as they trotted along floors overhead, woke pulses of love in household hearts that were not unmarked in heaven. Her eyes are sweet and subtle, wild and sleepy, by turns; oftentimes rising to the clouds, oftentimes challenging the heavens. She wears a diadem round her head. And I knew by childish memories that she could go abroad upon the winds, when she heard the sobbing of litanies, or the thundering of organs, and when she beheld the mustering of summer clouds. This Sister, the elder, it is that carries keys more than papal at her girdle, which open every cottage and every palace. She, to my knowledge, sat all last summer by the bedside of the blind beggar, him that so often and so gladly I talked with, whose pious daughter, eight years old, with the sunny countenance, resisted the temptations of play and village mirth, to travel all day long on dusty roads with her afflicted father. For this did God send her a great reward. In the spring time of the year, and whilst yet her own spring was budding, He recalled her to himself. But her blind father mourns for ever over *her*: still he dreams at midnight that

## LEVANA

the little guiding hand is locked within his own; and still he wakens to a darkness that is now within a second and a deeper darkness. This *Mater Leptynmarum* also has been sitting all this winter of 1844-5 within the bed-chamber of the Czar, bringing before his eyes a daughter (not less pious) that vanished to God not less suddenly, and left behind her a darkness not less profound. By the power of the keys it is that Our Lady of Tears glides, a ghostly intruder, into the chambers of sleepless men, sleepless women, sleepless children, from Ganges to the Nile, from Nile to Mississippi. And her, because she is the first-born of her house, and has the widest empire, let us honour with the title of "Madonna".

The second sister is called *Mater Suspiriorum*, Our Lady of Sighs. She never scales the clouds, nor walks abroad upon the winds. She wears no diadem. And her eyes, if they were ever seen, would be neither sweet nor subtle; no man could read their story; they would be found filled with perishing dreams, and with wrecks of forgotten delirium. But she raises not her eyes; her head, on which sits a dilapidated turban, droops for ever, for ever fastens on the dust. She weeps not. She groans not. But she sighs inaudibly at intervals. Her sister, Madonna, is oftentimes stormy and frantic, raging in the highest against heaven, and demanding back her darlings. But Our Lady of Sighs never clamours, never defies, dreams not of rebellious aspirations. She is humble to abjectness. Hers is the meekness



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thy sceptre lie heavy on his head. Suffer not woman and her tenderness to sit near him in his darkness. Banish the frailties of hope; wither the relenting of love; scorch the fountains of tears; curse him as *only thou* canst curse. So shall he be accomplished in the furnace; so shall he see the things that ought *not* to be seen, sights that are abominable, and secrets that are unutterable. So shall he read elder truths, sad truths, grand truths, fearful truths. So shall he rise again *before* he dies. And so shall our commission be accomplished which from God we had,—to plague his heart until we had unfolded the capacities of his spirit."



## NOTES BY THE AUTHOR

*Numbers refer to pages*

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### JULIUS CÆSAR

9. *The night was stormy.* It is an interesting circumstance in the habits of the ancient Romans, that their journeys were pursued very much in the night-time, and by torchlight. Cicero, in one of his letters, speaks of passing through the towns of Italy by night, as a serviceable scheme for some political purpose, either of avoiding too much to publish his motions, or of evading the necessity (else perhaps not avoidable) of drawing out the party sentiments of the magistrates in the circumstances of honour or neglect with which they might choose to receive him. His words, however, imply that the practice was by no means an uncommon one. And, indeed, from some passages in writers of the Augustan era, it would seem that this custom was not confined to people of distinction, but was familiar to a class of travellers so low in rank as to be capable of abusing their opportunities of concealment for the infliction of wanton injury upon the woods and fences which bounded the margin of the high-road. Under the cloud of night and solitude, the mischief-loving traveller was often in the habit of applying his torch to the withered boughs of woods, or to artificial hedges; and extensive ravages by fire, such as now happen not unfrequently in the American woods (but generally from carelessness in scattering the glowing embers of a fire, or even the ashes of a pipe), were then occasionally the result of mere wantonness of mischief. Ovid accordingly notices, as one amongst the familiar images of daybreak, the half-burnt torch of the traveller; and, apparently, from the position which it holds in his description, where it is ranked with the most familiar

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of all circumstances in all countries—that of the rural labourer going out to his morning tasks—it must have been common indeed:

“*Semiūstamque faciem vigilat nocte viator  
Ponet; et ad solitum rusticus ibit opus*”.

This occurs in the *Fassi*;—elsewhere he notices it for its danger :

“*Ut facibus sepes ardent, cum forte viator  
Vel nimis admovit, vel jam sub luce reliquit*”.

He, however, we see, good-naturedly ascribes the danger to mere carelessness, in bringing the torch too near to the hedge, or tossing it away at daybreak. But Varro, a more matter-of-fact observer, does not disguise the plain truth, that these disasters were often the product of pure malicious frolic. For instance, in recommending a certain kind of quickset fence, he insists upon it, as one of its advantages, that it will not readily ignite under the torch of the mischievous wayfarer: “*Naturale sepi-  
mentum*”, says he, “*quod obseri solet virgultis aut spinis,  
praetereruntis lascivi non metuet facem*”. It is not easy to see the origin or advantage of this practice of nocturnal travelling (which must have considerably increased the hazards of a journey), excepting only in the heats of summer. It is probable, however, that men of high rank and public station may have introduced the practice by way of releasing corporate bodies in large towns from the burdensome ceremonies of public receptions; thus making a compromise between their own dignity and the convenience of the provincial public. Once introduced, and the arrangements upon the road for meeting the wants of travellers once adapted to such a practice, it would easily become universal. It is, however, very possible that mere horror of the heats of day-time may have been the original ground for it. The ancients appear to have shrunk from no hardship so trying and insufferable as that of heat. And in relation to that subject, it is interesting to observe the way in which the ordinary use of language has accommodated itself to that feeling. Our northern way of expressing effeminacy is derived chiefly from the hardships of cold. He that shrinks from the

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trials and rough experience of real life in any department, is described by the contemptuous prefix of *chimney-corner*, as if shrinking from the cold which he would meet on coming out into the open air amongst his fellow-men. Thus, a *chimney-corner* politician, for a mere speculator or unpractical dreamer. But the very same indolent habit of aerial speculation, which courts no test of real life and practice, is described by the ancients under the term *umbraticus*, or seeking the cool shade, and shrinking from the heat. Thus, an *umbraticus doctor* is one who has no practical solidity in his teaching. The fatigue and hardship of real life, in short, are represented by the ancients under the uniform image of heat, and by the moderns under that of cold.

11. *it will be the last.* According to Suetonius, the circumstances of this memorable night were as follows:— As soon as the decisive intelligence was received, that the intrigues of his enemies had prevailed at Rome, and that the interposition of the popular magistrates (the tribunes) was set aside, Cæsar sent forward the troops, who were then at his head-quarters, but in as private a manner as possible. He himself, by way of masque (*per dissimulationem*), attended a public spectacle, gave an audience to an architect who wished to lay before him a plan for a school of gladiators which Cæsar designed to build, and finally presented himself at a banquet, which was very numerously attended. From this, about sunset, he set forward in a carriage, drawn by mules, and with a small escort (*modico comitatu*). Losing his road, which was the most private he could find (*occultissimum*), he quitted his carriage and proceeded on foot. At dawn he met with a guide; after which followed the above incidents.

22. *characteristic anecdotes.* Middleton's *Life of Cicero*, which still continues to be the most readable digest of these affairs, is feeble and contradictory. He discovers that Cæsar was no general! But the single merit which M.'s work was supposed to possess, viz., the better and more critical arrangement of Cicero's Letters, in respect to their chronology, has of late years been detected as a robbery from the celebrated Bellenden, of James the First's time.

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26. *conspiracy of Catiline*. Suetonius, speaking of this conspiracy, says, that Cæsar was *nominatus inter socios Catilinae*, which has been erroneously understood to mean that he was *talked of* as an accomplice; but in fact, as Casaubon first pointed out, *nominatus* is a technical term of the Roman jurisprudence, and means that he was formally denounced.

28. *elephants "indorsed with towers"*. See Milton's gorgeous description of the Parthian warfare in the *Paradise Regained*.

30. *tall*. Whereas, to show the lawless caprices upon which French writers have endeavoured to found a brief notoriety, some contributor to the memoirs of *L'Académie des Inscriptions*, expressly asserts, without a vestige of countenance from any authority whatsoever, that Cæsar was "several feet high", but being "invited" to circumstantiate, replied, "five feet nothing"; but this being French measure, would give him (if we rightly remember the French scale), about five times three-fourths of an inch more. Nonsense. Suetonius, who stood so near to the Julian generation, is guarantee for his *proceritas*.

34. *any special or exceptional advantage which it really had*. Cæsar had the merit of being the first person to propose the daily publication of the acts and votes of the Senate. So far, i.e. to the extent of laying a large foundation, Cæsar was the *Father of Newspapers*. In the form of public and official despatches, he made also some useful innovations; and it may be mentioned, for the curiosity of the incident, that the cipher which he used in his correspondence, was the following very simple one:—For every letter of the alphabet he substituted that which stood third removed from it in the order of succession. Thus, for A, he used D; for D, G, and so on.

### REVOLT OF THE TARTARS

71. *the accompaniment of women*. Singular it is, and not generally known, that Grecian women accompanied the *anabasis* of the younger Cyrus and the subsequent Retreat of the Ten Thousand. Xenophon affirms that there were "many" women in the Greek army—

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πολλαὶ γῆραι ἔταιραι ἐν τῷ σπαρεύματι; and in a late stage of that trying expedition, it is evident that women were amongst the survivors.

79. "trashed". This is an expressive word used by Beaumont and Fletcher in their *Bondyca*, &c., to describe the case of a person retarded and embarrassed in flight, or in pursuit, by some encumbrance, whether thing or person, too valuable to be left behind.

82. *Feka-Zechorr*. There was another ouloss equally strong with that of Feka-Zechorr, viz., that of Erketunn, under the government of Assarcho and Machi, whom some obligations of treaty or other hidden motives drew into the general conspiracy of revolt. But fortunately the two chieftains found means to assure the Governor of Astrachan, on the first outbreak of the insurrection, that their real wishes were for maintaining the old connection with Russia. The Cossacks, therefore, to whom the pursuit was intrusted, had instructions to act cautiously and according to circumstances on coming up with them. The result was, through the prudent management of Assarcho, that the clan, without compromising their pride or independence, made such moderate submissions as satisfied the Cossacks; and eventually both chieftains and people received from the Czarina the rewards and honours of exemplary fidelity.

100. *the vast central deserts of Asia*. All the circumstances are learned from a long state paper upon the subject of this Kalmuck migration, drawn up in the Chinese language by the Emperor himself. Parts of this paper have been translated by the Jesuit missionaries. The Emperor states the whole motives of his conduct and the chief incidents at great length.

101. *camels "indorsed"*. "And elephants indorsed with towers".—Milton in *Paradise Regained*.

114. *short but emphatic inscription*. This inscription has been slightly altered in one or two phrases, and particularly in adapting to the Christian era the Emperor's expressions for the year of the original Exodus from China and the retrogressive Exodus from Russia. With respect

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to the designation adopted for the Russian Emperor, either it is built upon some confusion between him and the Byzantine Cæsars, as though the former, being of the same religion with the latter (and occupying in part the same longitudes, though in different latitudes), might be considered as his modern successor; or else it refers simply to the Greek form of Christianity professed by the Russian Emperor and Church.

### RHETORIC

115. *Rhetoric*. Suggested as an excursive review by Whately's *Elements of Rhetoric*.

In what is said at the beginning of this paper of the true meaning of the Enthymeme, as determined by Facciolati, we must be understood with an exclusive reference to rhetoric. In logic the old acceptance cannot be disturbed.

118. *within the limits of the plausible*. It is ludicrous to see the perplexity of some translators and commentators of the Rhetoric, who, having read it under a false point of view, labour to defend it on that footing. On its real footing it needs no defence.

119. *learned Scottish friend*. This "learned Scotch friend" was the late Sir William Hamilton. It was in the summer before Waterloo, viz., in the summer of 1814, that I first became acquainted with him; in fact forty-five years ago, on this 20th day of March, 1859, from which I date my hurried revision of this paper, entitled *Rhetoric*.

*De Enthymemate*. It stands at p. 227 of Jacobi Facciolati *Orationes XII, Acroases, &c. Patavii, 1729*. This is the second Italian edition, and was printed at the University Press.

120. "Dutch Burgersdyk." Pope in the *Dunciad*. The other names, if qualified apparently to frighten a horse, are all real names of men who did business in logic some 250 and 200 years ago, and were really no pretenders, though unhappily both grim and grimy in the impertinent estimates of contemporary women.



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supplications of the widowed Queens to Theseus, the invocations of their tutelar divinities by Palamon and Arcite, the death of Arcite, &c., are finished in a more elaborate style of excellency than any other almost of Shakspere's most felicitous scenes. In their first intention, they were perhaps merely rhetorical; but the furnace of composition has transmuted their substance. Indeed, specimens of mere rhetoric would be better sought in some of the other great dramatists, who are under a less fatal necessity of turning everything they touch into the pure gold of poetry. Two other writers, with great original capacities for rhetoric, we have omitted in our list from separate considerations: we mean Sir Walter Raleigh and Lord Bacon. The first will hardly have been missed by the general reader; for his finest passages are dispersed through the body of his bulky history, and are touched with a sadness too pathetic, and of too personal a growth, to fulfil the conditions of a gay rhetoric as an art rejoicing in its own energies. With regard to Lord Bacon, the case is different. He had great advantages for rhetoric, being figurative and sensuous (as great thinkers must always be), and having no feelings too profound, or of a nature to disturb the balance of a pleasurable activity; but yet, if we except a few letters, and parts of a few speeches, he never comes forward as a rhetorician. The reason is, that being always in quest of absolute truth, he contemplates all subjects—not through the rhetorical fancy, which is most excited by mere seeming resemblances, and such as can only sustain themselves under a single phasis, but through the philosophic fancy, or that which rests upon real analogies. Another unfavourable circumstance, arising in fact out of the plethoric fulness of Lord B.'s mind, is the short-hand style of his composition, in which the connections are seldom fully developed. It was the lively *mot* of a great modern poet, speaking of Lord B.'s Essays, "that they are not plants, but seeds; not oaks, but acorns".

156. *Templum in modum arcis.* Tacitus of the Temple of Jerusalem.

*Bedford level*, a rich tract of land so called in Bedfordshire.

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166. *as meditation or philosophy of poetry.* The nearest approach to reflective poetry which we could possibly remember in Italian literature, lies about the works of Salvator Rosa (the great painter);—where, however, it assumes too much the character of satire.

168. *a separate articulation.* We may take the opportunity of noticing what it is that constitutes the peculiar and characteristic circumstance in Burke's manner of composition. It is this; that under his treatment every truth, be it what it may, every theme of a sentence, grows in the very act of unfolding it. Take any sentence you please from Dr. Johnson, suppose, and it will be found to contain a thought, good or bad, fully preconceived. Whereas in Burke, whatever may have been the preconception, it receives a new determination or inflection at every clause of the sentence. Some collateral adjunct of the main proposition, some temperament or restraint, some oblique glance at its remote affinities, will invariably be found to attend the progress of his sentence, like the spray from a waterfall, or the scintillations from the iron under the blacksmith's hammer. Hence whilst a writer of Dr. Johnson's class seems only to look back upon his thoughts, Burke looks forward, and does in fact advance and change his own station concurrently with the advance of the sentences. This peculiarity is no doubt in some degree due to the habit of extempore speaking, but not to that only.

173. *played tricks with language.* The following illustration, however, from Dr. Johnson's critique on Prior's *Solemn*, is far from a happy one: "He had infused into it much knowledge and much thought; had often polished it to elegance, dignified it with splendour, and sometimes heightened it to sublimity; he perceived in it many excellencies, and did not perceive that it wanted that, without which all others are of small avail, the power of *engaging attention* and *alluring curiosity*". The parts marked in *italics* are those to which Dr. Whately would object as tautologic. Yet this objection can hardly be sustained; the ideas are all sufficiently discriminated; the fault is, that they are applied to no real corresponding differences in Prior.

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199. *wore the royal livery.* The general impression was, that the royal livery belonged of right to the mail-coachmen as their professional dress. But that was an error. To the guard it *did* belong, I believe, and was obviously essential as an official warrant, and as a means of instant identification for his person, in the discharge of his important public duties. But the coachman, and especially if his place in the series did not connect him immediately with London and the General Post-office, obtained the scarlet coat only as an honorary distinction after long (or, if not long, trying and special) service.

201. *turrets.* As one who loves and venerates Chaucer for his unrivalled merits of tenderness, of picturesque characterisation, and of narrative skill, I noticed with great pleasure that the word *torrettes* is used by him to designate the little devices through which the reins are made to pass. This same word, in the same exact sense, I heard uniformly used by many scores of illustrious mail-coachmen, to whose confidential friendship I had the honour of being admitted in my younger days.

202. *Mr. Waterton.* Had the reader lived through the last generation, he would not need to be told that some thirty or thirty-five years back, Mr. Waterton, a distinguished country gentleman of ancient family in Northumberland, publicly mounted and rode in top-boots a savage old crocodile, that was restive and very impertinent, but all to no purpose. The crocodile jibbed and tried to kick, but vainly. He was no more able to throw the squire, than Sinbad was to throw the old scoundrel who used his back without paying for it, until he discovered a mode (slightly immoral, perhaps, though some think not) of murdering the old fraudulent jockey, and so circuitously of unhorsing him.

203. *households.* Roe-deer do not congregate in herds like the fallow or the red deer, but by separate families, parents and children; which feature of approximation to the sanctity of human hearths, added to their comparatively miniature and graceful proportions, conciliate to them an interest of peculiar tenderness, supposing even that this beautiful creature is less character-

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etically impressed with the grandeurs of savage and forest life.

205. *audacity*. Such the French accounted it; and it has struck me that Soult would not have been so popular in London, at the period of her present Majesty's coronation, or in Manchester, on the occasion of his visit to that town, if they had been aware of the insolence with which he spoke of us in notes written at intervals from the field of Waterloo. As though it had been mere folly in our army to look a French one in the face, he said in more notes than one, dated from two to four p.m. on the field of Waterloo, "Here are the English—we have them; they are caught *en flagrant delit*". Yet no man should have known us better; no man had drunk deeper from the cup of humiliation than Soult had in 1809, when ejected by us with headlong violence from Oporto, and pursued through a long line of wrecks to the frontier of Spain; subsequently at Albuera, in the bloodiest of recorded battles, to say nothing of Toulouse, he should have learned our pretensions.

*at that time.* I speak of the era previous to Waterloo.

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have recollect ed that a river, not to be compared with the Thames even as to volume of water—viz., the Tiber—has contrived to make itself heard of in this world for twenty-five centuries to an extent not reached as yet by any river, however copulent, of his own land. The glory of the Thames is measured by the destiny of the population to which it ministers, by the commerce which it supports, by the grandeur of the empire in which, though far from the largest, it is the most influential stream. Upon some such scale, and not by a transfer of Columbian standards, is the course of our English mails to be valued. The American may fancy the effect of his own valuations to our English ears, by supposing the case of a Siberian glorifying his country in these terms:—"These wretches, sir, in France and England, cannot march half a mile in any direction without finding a house where food can be had and lodging; whereas, such is the noble desolation of our magnificent country, that in many a direction for a thousand miles, I will engage that a dog shall not find shelter from a snow-storm, nor a wren find an apology for breakfast".

212. *glittering laurels.* I must observe, that the colour of green suffers almost a spiritual change and exaltation under the effect of Bengal lights.

226. *confluent.* Suppose a capital Y (the Pythagorean letter): Lancaster is at the foot of this letter; Liverpool at the top of the *right* branch; Manchester at the top of the *left*; proud Preston at the centre, where the two branches unite. It is thirty-three miles along either of the two branches; it is twenty-two miles along the stem—viz., from Preston in the middle, to Lancaster at the root. There's a lesson in geography for the reader.

228. *twice in the year.* There were at that time only two assizes even in the most populous counties—viz., the Lent Assizes, and the Summer Assizes.

229. *sigh-born.* I owe the suggestion of this word to an obscure remembrance of a beautiful phrase in "Giraldus Cambrensis"—viz., *suspiriosae cogitationes*.

232. *the crossing over to the other.* It is true that, according to the law of the case as established by legal

## NOTES

precedents, all carriages were required to give way before Royal equipages, and therefore before the mail as one of them. But this only increased the danger, as being a regulation very imperfectly made known, very unequally enforced, and therefore often embarrassing the movements on both sides.

232. *quartering*. This is the technical word, and, I presume, derived from the French *cartayer*, to evade a rut or any obstacle.

241. *averted signs*. I read the course and changes of the lady's agony in the succession of her involuntary gestures; but it must be remembered that I read all this from the rear, never once catching the lady's full face, and even her profile imperfectly.

248. *Campo Santo*. It is probable that most of my readers will be acquainted with the history of the Campo Santo (or cemetery) at Pisa, composed of earth brought from Jerusalem for a bed of sanctity, as the highest prize which the noble piety of crusaders could ask or imagine. To readers who are unacquainted with England, or who (being English) are yet unacquainted with the cathedral cities of England, it may be right to mention that the graves within-side the cathedrals often form a flat pavement over which carriages and horses *might* run; and perhaps a boyish remembrance of one particular cathedral, across which I had seen passengers walk and burdens carried, as about two centuries back they were through the middle of St. Paul's in London, may have assisted my dream.

## SUSPIRIA DE PROFUNDIS

271. *exorcised*. Some readers may be apt to suppose, from all English experience, that the word *exorcise* means properly banishment to the shades. Not so. Citation from the shades, or sometimes the torturing coercion of mystic adjurations, is more truly the primary sense.

272. *thrown off from the fields of ocean*. Many readers will recall, though, at the moment of



The Text of this edition of *De Quincey's Essays*  
has been revised, and the Notes have been prepared,  
by Mr. Thomas Bayne.



## NOTES

*Numbers refer to pages*

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### JULIUS CÆSAR

(The *Cæsars*, a series of which this was the first number, began to appear in *Blackwood's Magazine* in 1832.)

1. *Lucan* (39-65 A.D.) wrote the heroic poem *Pharsalia*, in ten books, embodying a history of the struggle between Cæsar and Pompey. The poet's character of Cato Uticensis has been called "a personification of godlike virtue".

*Nil actum, &c.*, "reckoning nothing done if any detail had to be overtaken".

*Marius*. The famous rivals, Marius and Sylla or Sulla, are very fully and suggestively estimated in one of E. A. Freeman's *Historical Essays*.

*that character in Horace*, viz. the just man, admirably tenacious of purpose, eulogized in *Odes*, III. iii.: "Were the shattered world to fall about him, the ruins would strike him undismayed".

2. *The Attilas and the Tamerlances*. Attila (406-453 A.D.), king of the Huns, and known as "the Scourge of God", is the subject of an unsatisfactory play by Corneille. See Thierry's *Histoire d'Attila*. Tamerlane (1336-1405), "Timour the Tartar", is the hero of Marlowe's first great tragedy.

3. *Indocilis privata loqui*, "incapable of learning to discuss personal matters".

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22. *Casaubon*, Isaac (1559-1614), one of the greatest of classical commentators, wrote on the satire of the Greeks and Romans, on ecclesiastical liberty, &c., and edited many classical authors. See Mark Pattison's *Isaac Casaubon*, 1875.

*one congiary*, a largess of corn or wine, ultimately of money, bestowed by the emperors on the populace. The term is from *cōgius*, a gallon.

*Wallenstein* (1583-1634), while selfish and even unscrupulous in his ambition, had extraordinary power in winning the affections of his soldiers and leading them to victory. See Schiller's *History of the Thirty Years' War* and Coleridge's *Wallenstein*.

26. *the lowest fæx Romuli*, the dregs of the nation founded by Romulus. *Fæx populi* is used by Cicero.

27. *kings even are known to have taken his pay*. After the final conquest of Gaul in 51 B.C. Cæsar generously entertained chiefs of tribes in his winter quarters at Arras, gave them handsome presents, and sent them home thoroughly satisfied with Roman supremacy. This, says Froude (*Julius Cæsar*, p. 374), was "a unique experience in political history".

*sacrament of military obedience*. *Sacramentum* was the term used for the oath taken by newly-enlisted soldiers.

*Marcellus*, Caius, and Lentulus, two patricians, became consuls in 49 B.C., the chief feature of their policy being the projected degradation of Cæsar

28. *naumachiae*, mimic sea-fights.

"*indorsed with towers*". See "elephants endorser with towers", *Paradise Regained*, iii. 329. Ben Jonson, *Underwoods*, lxxii., uses "endorse" in describing the horsemanship of William, Earl of Newcastle.

*watch and ward about the emperor's grave*. "The crowds of libertini who assisted at Cæsar's funeral proved that he was not regarded as the enemy of these unfortunates, but as their special friend" (Froude's *Julius Cæsar*, p. 554).

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29. *the Hurdwar on the Ganges.* The Hardwár, or "Vishnu's Gate", at the point where the Gauges emerges into Hindostan, is consecrated to the spring ablutions of crowding pilgrims.

*Babylonian confusion*, i.e. a confusion similar to that of Babel. The forms "Babylonic" and "Babylonical" are similarly used.

30. *a work of the Emperor Julian's.* Julian the Apostate (331-363 A.D.) left in his *Cæsares* a series of satires on the Cæsars.

33. *chastisement of Dacia.* This country, between the Danube and the Carpathians, was occupied by a daring people who made frequent raids into Roman territory. Horace, *Odes*, III. viii., when suggesting to Mæcenas a temporary relaxation from cares of State, reminds him *inter alia* that the army of the Dacian king has been overthrown—*Occidit Daci Cotisonis agmen.*

*the conquest of Parthia.* The Parthians, the proverbial horse-archers, inhabiting a loosely-defined region south-east of the Caspian, are also indifferently called Persians and Medes by the Roman poets of the Augustan age. In the ode cited in the preceding note Horace refers to a famous intestine struggle in the words *Medus infestus sibi*, "the Mede hostile to himself". This civil broil being appealed to Augustus, he imposed terms that long restrained these marauders on his eastern borders.

*The reformation of the calendar.* The Julian style was introduced in 46 B.C. by Cæsar, who utilized the calculations of Sosigenes, an astronomer of Alexandria.

35. *Augustus Cæsar* (63 B.C.-14 A.D.), the first Roman emperor, son of Caius Octavius, was a grand-nephew of Julius Cæsar, his mother Atia being the daughter of Cæsar's sister Julia.

*darrock* (A.S. *daegweorc*), day's work, exists in Scotland in the contracted form *darg*. The writer on Alloa parish, *Statistical Account*, viii. 602, says the tenants "are subject to a *darg* (or day's work) for every acre, or 10d. per annum".

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70. *the Huns, &c.* The Huns, moving westwards from the district of the Ural, became a power in the regions round the eastern Danube in the fourth and fifth centuries. Their influence quickly ceased after the death of their greatest leader, Attila, in 453. The Avars, of Tartar origin, flourished in the sixth and seventh centuries from the north of the Adriatic to the Black Sea. Subdued by Charlemagne, they disappear from history early in the ninth century. From the thirteenth to the sixteenth century the Mongols were conquering or being conquered from China to European Russia.

72. *a pestilence.* In 430 B.C., the second year of the Peloponnesian War, a mysterious plague cut off something like a fourth of the people of Athens. For the plague in London in 1665 see Pepys's *Diary*.

*the river Jaik, or Yaik,* one of the rivers of the Salt Marshes to the north of the Caspian.

74. *acharnement,* stubborn tenacity.

75. *Koulagina,* a fortress on the Ural, in the country of the Ural Cossacks.

79. "trashed". Compare *The Tempest*, i. 2. 79, "to trash for over-topping".

*summa rerum,* the chief point at issue.

81. *Ouchim.* The range of hills enclosing this defile is north of the Sea of Aral.

82. *the river Irgitch.* This river, and the Torgau mentioned with it, are in the vast territory extending between the south end of the Ural range and Lake Balkash.

86. *tears even more bitter than those of Xerxes.* When proceeding to invade Greece in 480 B.C., Xerxes, gazing on his numerous troops and his vast fleet from a marble throne at Abydos, wept at the thought that in a hundred years not a man in the assemblage would be alive.

88. *Orsk,* on the Ural, where the river turns westward; Oriembourg is to the south-east, across the Kirghiz Steppes.

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92. *the Hetman* (cp. Ger. *hauptmann*, headman), the head or general of the Cossacks. In *Mazeppa* iii, Byron has, "The Ukraine's Hetman, calm and bold".

*wild horses.* The Tarpan, or wild horse of southern Russia, is abundant, and goes in herds. The Cossacks are said to regard the animal as useless for practical purposes.

97. "*More fell than anguish, hunger, or the sea*". From *Othello*, v. 2. 361.

98. *post equitem sedet atra cura*, "behind the horseman sits black Care", is from Horace, *Odes*, III. i. 40.

"from morn to dewy eve," a reminiscence of *Paradise Lost*, i. 742:—

"From morn  
To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve".

101. *camels "indorsed"*. See *supra Julius Caesar*, note "indorsed with towers".

104. *desert of Kobi*, i.e. Gobi, south-east from Lake Baikal ("the lake of Tengis" in the text), is the eastern part of the Central Asian depression.

106. *an ordinary effect of thirst*. The narrative of the terrible sufferings undergone in the "Black Hole of Calcutta", 19th June, 1756, forcibly illustrates the truth of this statement. See Macaulay's *Essay on Clive*.

107. "*globes*" and "*turms*". The "globe" was a circular arrangement of soldiers, favoured by the Romans. Milton has "a globe of fiery seraphim" in *Paradise Lost*, ii. 512. "Turm" (Lat. *turma*) was a troop of cavalry. For "turms of horse" see *Paradise Regained*, iv. 66.

108. *the river Ily* flows north-west into Lake Baikal.

112. *lex talionis*, the law of retribution, which exacts an eye for an eye. "Nor is there", runs the Latin quotation, "any law more just than that the plotters of assassination should perish through their own device."

*household lares*, gods of the hearth, domestic resources.

## NOTES

### RHETORIC

(Suggested as an executive review by Whately's *Elements of Rhetoric*, 1828, and published in Blackwood's Magazine in 1840.)

115. There was a time. The subject was somewhat loosely handled before Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) defined it as a branch of Logic.

116. rhetoric of which Milton spoke. The reference is to Belial, *Paradise Lost*, II, 112:

"His tongue  
Dropt names, and could make the worse appear  
The better reason, to perplex and dash  
Mortals counsels".

the author of the *Philosophy of Rhetoric*. George Campbell (1719-1796), Principal of Marischal College, Aberdeen, published *Philosophy of Rhetoric* in 1776.

118. Latin use of the word *probabilis*, viz. capable of being proved; probable, but needing demonstration.

119. *Essay of Faccioliati's*. Jacopo Faccioli (1682-1769), lexicographer and exponent of classical literature, produced valuable Latin editions and commentaries. The *De Evidentiis* is in *Orationes XII, Horatian, &c.*, p. 227, ed. 1729. See Author's note.

Smigleyus, &c. "Dutch Burgheseyk" is named with German Cronek in Pope's *Dunciad*, IV, 105. Wordsworth's maternal grandmother was "one of the ancient northern family of Crickenthwaite, a name of note both in legal and theological lore".

120. *the Strid in Wharfsdale*. See Wordsworth's *The Excursion: A Conclusion*, st. 6:

"I will murmur on a thousand years,  
And flow as now it flows".

Julius Paccius, i.e. Giulio Pado (c. 1550-1635), Italian jurist and philosopher.

*apodictic*, or "apoditic", demonstrative, susceptible of definite, final proof.

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121. *bush* are extra-essential, i.e. as the alternative Greek phrase denotes, distinct from the theme.

123. *an eloquentia umbratrica*, an eloquence of the shade, or of one's leisure.

124. *the Declinations attributed to Quintilian*. Probably by different authors at different epochs, these, numbering 164, were edited by C. Ritter in 1885.

"*to Macedon and Artaxerxes' throne*". From *Paradise Regained*, iv. 267.

125. *το αγχιστροφορ*, the inward reach and swift turn.

126. *The contest of Ajax and Ulysses*, described in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, xiii. 1.

*the Latin fathers*. "I conceive Origen, Jerome, and Augustine", says Coleridge, "to be the three great fathers in respect of theology; and Basil, Gregory Nazianzen, and Chrysostom in respect of rhetoric" (*Table Talk*, 12th July, 1827).

*an Asiatic cross*. The Attic literary style follows Aristotle, while the Asiatic or 'florid' derives from Hegesias of Magnesia.

*Birmingham rhetoricians*, i.e. counterfeit, for which the form 'Brummingem' is common.

*Messieurs of the Port Royal*. Arnauld and other great scholars of the Port-Royal des Champs, near Versailles, prepared famous grammatical and rhetorical textbooks. See the *Port-Royal Logic* of Spencer Baynes, 1881.

127. *the common crepusculum* (Lat. *creper*, dusky), twilight.

128. *funambulist* (Lat. *funis*, a rope, and *ambulo*, I walk), rope-walker.

129. *Hume, in one of his essays*. See "Of Eloquence", *Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary* (1742).

131. *a competitor in oil-gas*. The text took its final shape in 1859.

"*Therefore are feasts so solemn and so rare*", &c. From Shakespeare, Sonnet 52.

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133. *plaisanteur*, humorist. The word is an adaptation.

134. *Donne*, John (1573-1631). See *Life* by Walton, and Mr. E. W. Gosse; *Works*, ed. Alford, 1859.

*Metaphysical Poets*. See Johnson's "Cowley" in the *Lives of the Poets*.

137. *a limitary intellect*, an intellect of limited range.

as Mr. Gifford has shown. William Gifford (1757-1826), editor of the *Quarterly Review*, produced in 1805 his fine edition of Massinger in 4 vols. The note referred to in the text is on *The Unnatural Combat*, ii. 1. 66, vol. i. p. 48.

*intuit*, i.e. perceive by intuition. The word is sometimes technically used, as e.g. when Lewes (*History of Philosophy*, ii. 512) says that mathematical quantities "come into existence by being intuited or constructed".

*the Satellites of Jupiter*. One of the tests in determining the velocity of light is the timing of the eclipses of these bodies when they are at the greatest and the least distance from the earth. They were discovered by Galileo.

138. *Paley*, William (1743-1805), Archdeacon of Carlisle and Rector of Bishop Wearmouth, author of *Moral and Political Philosophy*, *Horæ Paulinæ*, *Christian Evidences*, and *Natural Theology*, standard works, has been accused, because of the point of view noted in the text, of "a too business-like and profit-and-loss view of religion".

*the execution is in the best style*. In his lecture on "Shakespeare and Milton" (*English Poets and Comic Writers*, ed. 1870) Hazlitt says of the debate in *Paradise Lost*, ii, "There is a decidedly manly tone in the arguments and sentiments, an eloquent dogmatism, as if each person spoke from thorough conviction; an excellence which Milton probably borrowed from his spirit of partisanship, or else his spirit of partisanship from the natural firmness and vigour of his mind". Eminent statesmen

## NOTES

are said to learn off these debates as part of their rhetorical training.

139. *in particular the speech*. See *Paradise Regained*, i. 357.

*spolia opima*, lit. the trophies gained when a Roman commander-in-chief overthrew the officer of the same rank in the enemy's camp. History records only three examples.

*Protagonistæ*. Protagonists; leaders in the fray.

*John Paul Richter* (1763-1825), familiarly known as Jean Paul, is the subject of a special study by De Quincey, who gives valuable *Analecta* from the writings of the humorist. See vol. xi of De Quincey's *Collected Works*.

140. "myriad-mindedness" of *Shakspere*. The expression is due to Coleridge, who also declares Shakespeare to be "the morning star, the guide and the pioneer, of true philosophy" (*Lectures on Shakespeare*, p. 242, ed. 1883).

*a passage in the Urn-Burial*. The quotation opens chap. v of Sir Thomas Browne's *Hydriotaphia or Urn-Burial*.

*fluctus decumanus*, topmost (lit. tenth) wave. The farmers of the Decumæ or tithes had the highest position among the Roman *publicani* or tax-gatherers.

*Oὐ μα τούς ἐν Μαραθώνι τεθνκότας*. "No, by those that fell at Marathon"—a typical illustration of cheap heroics.

141. *the admirable one by Coleridge*. See *Literary Remains*, ed. H. N. Coleridge, vol. ii. p. 413.

142. *Cleopatra's draught*. A legend tells that, when Antony expressed surprise at the costly banquet prepared in his honour, Cleopatra dissolved a pearl eardrop in her liquor and, quaffing it, said, "My draught to Antony shall far exceed it".

*faciamus hominem, &c.* "Let us make man in our image" (*Genesis*, i. 26).

147. *speciosa miracula*, significant wonders. The

## NOTES

phrase is used by Horace (*Ars Poetica*, l. 144) with reference to the incidents of the *Odyssey*.

148. *that preserved by Locke*. See "A Letter from a Person of Quality to his Friend in the Country", Locke's Works, x. 200, ed. 1823.

149. "*How sweet an Ovid*", &c. The reference is to the following couplet in the *Dunciad*, iv. 169:

"How sweet an Ovid, Murray was our boast!  
How many Martials were in Pulteney lost!"

*William Murray*, Earl of Mansfield (1704–1793), was in his time Lord Chief-justice of the King's Bench. He was one of those assailed by Junius.

151. *In the course of the Hastings trial*. One of the charges against Warren Hastings (1732–1818) was that he had connived at the forfeiture of property, real and personal, which had been conferred on the Begums or dowager-princesses of Oudh. Contrast De Quincey's estimate of Sheridan with that of Byron in his *Monody on the Death of Sheridan*, in which the orator on this very point is eulogized as "the delegated voice of God".

*the most double-minded person in the world*. Edmund Burke (1729–1797) was one of the most subtle and effective of English statesmen and orators. For an account of his speech at the trial of Warren Hastings, see Mr. John Morley's monograph, *English Men of Letters*, chap. vii. There is an eloquent tribute to Burke's oratotical power in Wordsworth's *Prelude*, vii. 493–543.

*Rolla the Peruvian*. One of the characters in Sheridan's drama *Pizarro*.

*si quid sua carmina possunt*. "If their strains have any value", an adaptation of Virgil's *si quid mea carmina possunt*, *Aeneid*, ix. 446.

153. *the dancing efforts of Lady Blarney*, &c. See Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield*, chap. ix.

*Of Goldsmith it was said*. The words in Johnson's epitaph are, *Nullum quod tetigit non ornavit*, "He touched nothing that he did not adorn".

154. *picture of the degradation of Europe*. Burke

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published *Letters on a Regicide Peace* in 1795. In that year a treaty was concluded at Basle between the French Republic, Prussia, and Spain, Prussia withdrawing from the coalition against France.

155. *The Duke of Bedford's attack.* This was made in 1795 in reference to the grant of £2500 a year conferred directly on Burke by the Crown without being submitted to Parliament. Burke's retort, in his *Letter to a Noble Lord*, has been called "the most splendid repartee in the English language".

156. *Templum in modum arcis*, "a temple after the manner of a citadel", from Tacitus on the Temple of Jerusalem.

*The Bedford level*, embracing the bulk of the English Fen district, was named from Francis, Earl of Bedford, who, in 1634, began the successful drainage of the vast area.

157. *Dum domus Aeneæ, &c.* From *Aeneid*, ix. 448, which Dryden renders thus:

"Fix'd as the capitol's foundation lies;  
And spread, where'er the Roman eagle flies".

158. *Sir Philip Francis* (1740-1818) has not yet been finally identified as Junius.

161. "*Sufficit*," says a Roman author, &c., "it is enough that there be one rhetorician in a state".

164. *Von Troil's chapter.* This consists of the words, "There are no snakes in Iceland". See *infra* "Von Troil's Iceland" in *The English Mail-Coach*.

166. *Sir J. Davies*, i.e. Sir John Davies (1569-1626), author of *Nosce Teipsum*, a poem on immortality.

168. *Holy Dying.* In 1650 Jeremy Taylor published *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living*, which he followed in 1651 with *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Dying*. Frequently republished in a single volume, the two works together constitute a classic manual of devotion.

171. *an imbecile stranger.* Lindley Murray (1745-1826), author of a successful if inept English Grammar, was a native of Pennsylvania. Much has been done by

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English philologists—such as Latham, Morris, and others—since De Quincey wrote, but the most exhaustive English Grammars hitherto produced are by two strangers, Eduard Mätzner and Prof. C. Friedrich Koch.

172. *his triads and his antithetic balances*. Johnson was fond of running three clauses in a direct sequence, and he makes frequent use of antithesis.

*the Doctor's imitation of Juvenal*. Johnson's *Lector* appeared in 1738. He utilizes Juvenal as Pope does Horace.

173. *qui variare cupit, &c.*, "who desires to vary a simple theme excessively". From Horace, *Ars Poetica*, L. 29.

*principium indiscernibilium*, "the principle of imperceptible differences".

*sentence from Q. Curtius*. "Darius, leader of an army recently so great, who, as one heading a triumph rather than beginning an engagement, had entered battle seated aloft on his car—across the ground, which he had crowded with almost countless troops, a tract now vacant and lying waste in great desolation, was making his flight".

174. *Richard's opening soliloquy*. The first lines of *Richard III*.

*Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity*. See Book I, section i.

*drake-stone*, a thin flat stone made to skim on the surface of water.

176. *Mr. Wolf* (1759–1824), the German scholar whose *Prolegomena ad Homerum* (1795) illustrated the theory that the Homeric poems are a composite result and not the work of a single author.

178. *His Logic*. Whately's *Elements of Logic* appeared in 1827, and a reprint of the 9th edition, 1850, became a standard university text-book.

*totidem verbis*, "in so many words", in direct quotation.

## NOTES

### THE ENGLISH MAIL-COACH

(Contributed to *Blackwood's Magazine* in 1849.)

179. *I matriculated at Oxford.* De Quincey went to Worcester College, Oxford, probably in the autumn of 1803.

*Mr. Palmer.* In 1783 John Palmer submitted his scheme to Pitt, was presently appointed Controller to the General Post-office, and started the mail-coaches in 1784. His wife, according to De Quincey, was Lady Madeline, daughter of the fourth Duke of Gordon; but Professor Masson, after reference to Debrett, shows that this lady's second husband was Charles Palmer, of Lochley Park, Berks.

181. *the four terms.* "Act" is the Oxford academic name for Trinity term, and, while it points to a ceremony extinct since 1856, it still denotes the thesis offered by the candidate for a degree.

184. *the maxim.* De Quincey practically translates here the Latin formula of logicians, *De non apparentibus, &c.*

"raff" . . . "snobs". "Raff", in the sense of rabble, is found as early as the twelfth century. For "snob", see De Quincey's note.

185. *Lord Macartney* (1737-1806) headed the first diplomatic mission from Great Britain to China in 1792.

189. *running after you with his posse.* The allusion is to the *posse comitatus* or serviceable body that a sheriff may constrain to his support in an emergency.

*Von Troil's Iceland.* Dr. Uno Von Troil's *Letters on Iceland* (1780) are included in the first volume of Pinkerton's *Collection of the best and most interesting Voyages and Travels of the World*, 17 vols. (1808-14). For the "snakes" see *supra* "Von Troil's chapter" in *Rhetoric*.

*læsa majestas*, or *laesio majestatis*, injured dignity, high treason.

190. *a quotation from Virgil's "Æneid": "And*

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parts, with the result that "Hosts dropt their arms, and trembled as they heard" (Pope's *Iliad of Homer*, xviii. 264).

241. *woman's Ionic form*. In architecture the Doric order is sometimes compared to the male, and the more delicate and graceful Ionic to the female figure.

242. *corymbi*, pl. of Latin *corymbus*, a cluster, as of ivy; English corymb.

### SUSPIRIA DE PROFUNDIS

(Contributed to *Blackwood's Magazine* in 1845.)

#### DREAMING

255. *a contribution to a periodical work*. *The Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* appeared in the *London Magazine*, Sept.-Oct., 1821, and in 1822 was issued anonymously in a duodecimo volume.

258. *praemissis praemittendis*, the true antecedents being advanced.

262. *amplifying the dimensions of time*. "The sense of space, and, in the end, the sense of time were both powerfully affected. . . . I sometimes seemed to have lived for seventy or a hundred years in one night." (*Opium Confessions*, Part II, "The Pains of Opium".)

264. *The reader must suppose me at Oxford*. He matriculated in 1803, and first took opium in 1804.

### THE PALIMPSEST OF THE HUMAN BRAIN

265. *what is a Palimpsest?* The word is from Greek παλίν, again, and ψητός, rubbed, and the thing is a parchment with a new record superimposed on the original inscription. By a chemical process the first writing can be revealed.

266. *Cowper so playfully illustrates*. In *The Task*, Book I.

*immortal dulness*. In the *Dunciad*, i. 18, we learn that "born a goddess, Dulness never dies".

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266. *all that is essential in printing.* The Chinese seem to have been printers of a tabloid from remote ages, and their modern method dates from the tenth century. The tradition that Marco Polo brought block-printing from China to Europe is futile.

267. *Pisistratus* (d. 527 B.C.), tyrant of Athens, enriched the architecture of his capital and encouraged literature. He was the first in Greece to have a library; his personal seal contained the first complete MS. of the Homeric poems; and his patronage stimulated Thespis to produce the earliest form of tragedy. See De Quincey's "Homer and the Homericidae", *Works*, v. 289, ed. 1863.

268. *Dr. Whately* (1787-1863), Archbishop of Dublin, reviewed *infra*, *Essay on Rhetoric*.

269. *Hermes Trismegistus*, i.e. 'Hermes Thrice-greatest', the Greek name of the Egyptian god Thoth, who was considered the originator of Egyptian culture.

270. *a knightly romance.* "My Cid", from the Spanish "Mio Cid", which represents the Moorish "Sid-i", "my lord", is the romance of the greatest Spanish warrior of the eleventh century, and, dating in its first form from the end of the twelfth century, is probably the oldest existing Spanish document. Southey's admirable *Chronicle of the Cid* utilizes both the original poem and cognate legends. *Richard Coeur de Lion*, one of the best of the early metrical romances, figures in the notes to Scott's *Talisman*. See Weber's *Metrical Romances*. Sir *Tristrem* is associated with the legendary personality of Thomas the Rhymer (c. 1280), and *Lybeaus Disconus*, or rather *Lybeaus Desconus* (i.e. Le Beau Déconnu) is probably of slightly later date. It is included in Ritson's *Ancient English Metrical Romances*, 3 vols. (1802).

271. *Paracelsus* (?1490-1541), alchemist, whose real name was Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim, partly a mystic and partly a charlatan, did something, in spite of absurdities, for the advancement of chemical science. The poem Browning devotes to him is a suggestive delineation. See Hartmann's English *Life of Paracelsus*.

## NOTES

303. *turreted like that of Cybele.* The "Great Mother", or the "Mother of the Gods", Rhea or Cybele, represented in works of art seated on a throne, adorned with the mural crown, from which hangs a veil. Byron, *Childe Harold*, iv. i, describes Venice as a sea Cybele, "rising with her tiara of proud towers".

304. *Sublime Goddesses.* The Furies are euphemistically called, with a propitiatory motive, the Eumenides or well-disposed ones.

